

MILLENNIALS AS CONTRIBUTORS:  
A MENTORING APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

A THESIS PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
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JANUARY 2019



To my wife Michelle, for your partnership in ministry and never letting me quit;  
and to my kids for cheering me along during the entire journey

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis-project was truly a group effort. I may be the one turning it in and getting to use it on a resume someday, but many others have helped make this possible. First, to those who stood beside me through this entire season: our community group, the Beckham's, Miller's, McFall's, Porters', Braden's, and Riley's. You were a great community of believers to live life alongside during this process. To Doug and Nancy Bergman for your continued encouragement, grace, care, wisdom, and love you've provided my family over the years. To each of you, I am thankful for our time together and how the Lord used each of you instrumentally in the work He is doing now and will continue to do in my life and ministry. We miss you guys dearly.

I would like to thank the staff around me that has supported, encouraged, researched, edited, and gave me the extra nudge when I threw my hands up at times. To Alanna Sellinger for holding the ministry fort down for the weeks away during the summers for class, helping me make space in the calendar this last year to get the work done, and for help in editing many sections. To Lindsey Jacobi for doing various research, sermon preparation, and other details to get the things off my plate that I needed to do but could not in order to finish. I'm thankful for you.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my family. My Mom and Dad for all your support over the years. To my wife, Michelle: Your sacrifice in this journey was as significant as mine, if not more. To my kids: for the rich memories you have given your mom and me during these past five years. For long car rides in child seats from Norman, OK to Charlotte, NC; to Eddie and Chloe playing on the front porch after I arrived home from class; to Mackenzie being born. Thanks for giving your dad time to make this journey. Now I am dreaming of spending more time focused on each of you.



## ABSTRACT

Many congregations across the United States are currently looking for a solution to deal with the current decline of Millennial involvement in their churches. Could a look at some key characteristics of Millennials lend some clues as to potential solutions in which congregations could more effectively engage this generation so that they re-engage in congregational life but more importantly, become our future leaders?

It is with this in mind that this thesis project is written as an investigation of the role of mentoring and its effect on reaching and maturing Millennials as leaders in local congregations. Its content will present characteristics of the Millennial generation and its interplay with the church as well as the impact of mentorship in training and retaining Millennial leaders as congregants both in theory and in research. The project included the development of a mentoring strategy, recruitment of mentors and mentees, launch of a program and a one-year review of the program at two separate congregations in the southwest. The mentoring program proved effective at both congregations for the retention of Millennials, as well as their growth in leadership areas and commitments to the congregations.

This project used the gathering of literature on Millennials and the mentoring processes and solidifying a biblical precedent for the use of mentoring throughout Scripture to develop leaders. Along with the literature reviewed, there was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods utilized for the gathering of data and information specific to two church populations and reviewed. Analysis showed the impact of mentoring was favorable for the sample studied and presented several recommendations for future study and implementation.

## CHAPTER 1

### FUTURE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH ARE LEAVING

Generational shifts are dramas in slow motion. They tend to unfold gradually without press releases, evening news headlines, or large public demonstrations. However, every once in a while, the weight of a new generation begins to bear down on society, forcing us to look up from the daily grind, and realize that something is different and that things are not as they once were. Shifts such as these are rare, and they never ask for permission. Instead, the hefty generation simply asserts its will on all areas of life, but it especially affects culture—be it secular, religious, or vocational. Such a generation is now entering the work force and causing such a ruckus, and society has come to refer to them as “Millennials.”

Millennials as a generation have already evoked a smorgasbord of news articles, workplace shifts, and changing leadership dynamics, some people remain ignorant of this generation’s characteristics. The CliffsNotes version of the term Millennial is this: it refers to anyone born between the years of 1980 and 2001. With some quick math, it is simple to see that Millennials are no longer the grade school kids that the Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) and Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1979) once looked upon with a sly grin saying, “When they grow up...they will understand”.<sup>1</sup> Millennials have now indeed grown up and are noted for four main characteristics: it is the largest generation to have existed in the United States, it is the most educated generation in this country’s history, Millennials are extremely optimistic about their future and their potential, and they have a strong desire to be on teams where mentoring, coaching, and feedback is given regularly.

The sheer size of this particular generation is a pivotal reason why they are causing such dramatic shifts. To put some numbers around this shift, “Currently [Millennials] make up 16

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How Millennial Generation Is Shaking up the Workplace* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 5.

percent of the workforce and will increase to 40 percent of the workforce in the next few years.”<sup>2</sup> As this book was published in 2010, it is easily assumed that Millennials make up close to 40 percent of the workforce at this time of writing. Millennials are the largest generation ever recorded in history; it is impossible to ignore a group who makes up such a disproportionate amount of society at large.

Not only are Millennials forcing the world to take notice of them through their size, they are also demanding to be heard because of their level of education. One study found that, “Millennials are on the path to becoming the most educated generation in America’s history. Already their rate of receiving undergraduate degrees has surpassed all previous generations.”<sup>3</sup> It is not that Millennials have more diplomas than any other singular generation, it is that they have more diplomas than Generation X, the Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation combined. Millennials possess a huge amount of knowledge, and armed with their studies, they intend to make their impact on the world.

A third defining quality of this generating which is affecting the current culture is their extreme optimism and confidence. This reality is seen in one study that, “Compared to Xer teens a decade ago—today’s teens are more upbeat about the world in which they are growing up. Nine in ten describe themselves as ‘happy,’ ‘confident,’ and ‘positive.’”<sup>4</sup> Another survey asked Millennials to respond to the following statement: “I believe I can do something great.” The findings reported that, “About 60 percent agreed strongly, and another 36 percent agreed somewhat...That’s almost every respondent, 96 percent total!”<sup>5</sup> Millennials are not only optimistic, but their optimism has led them to believe that they will have a significant impact on

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<sup>2</sup> Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, *The 2020 Workplace: How Innovative Companies Attract, Develop, and Keep Tomorrow's Employees Today* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2010), Kindle.

<sup>3</sup> Meister and Willyerd, *The 2020 Workplace*, Kindle.

<sup>4</sup> Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Jess Rainer, *Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2011), Kindle.

the world. When combined with their size and educational force, the optimism of Millennials eradicates any doubt of this generation's intention to leave its mark on society.

Combining the above characteristics that tout the prowess of Millennials in their size, education, and optimism leaves little room to question the reality that its members are high achievers. And while research affirms this truth, it also somewhat surprisingly indicates that Millennials are aware that they do not solely possess all of the knowledge that the world has to offer. Accordingly, the fourth characteristic of Millennials is that they desire to be mentored, coached, and given regular feedback about their performance. Their hunger for growth is so strong that it impacts important life decisions such as where to work after graduating from college. One author wrote that Millennials are, "Clamoring for more coaching, training, and mentoring programs. After making job offers to college graduates, some recruiters are surprised when students immediately ask how often their company does performance reviews and whether they provide mentors."<sup>6</sup> Through their requests to be mentored, Millennials are stating, "We are teachable. Although we are confident, we are willing to learn. An experienced leader has value. Millennials understand this value, and we will listen to a mentor who has chosen to invest in us."<sup>7</sup> Millennials crave development—specifically growth that comes from mentorship with those a few steps in front of them—and their demands are changing the structure of the world around them.

It is imperative to understand Millennials and their defining qualities in order to fully see the impact that they are creating and why. If Millennials were only known as the largest generation, or singly the most highly educated, or simply extremely optimistic, they would not be causing the culture to shift so dramatically. However, when these three qualities are combined, it makes them a force to be reckoned with. When their power is fused to the reality that this generation wants to learn from those in front of them, Millennials are undoubtedly prime candidates for mentorship and vision casting to change the world. The congregations must

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<sup>6</sup> Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

realize this and do something. Millennials are ripe to be a generation that God uses to impact the world for His glory and our good through the local church. (2 Thess 1:11-12) The question then is: how is the church interacting with Millennials?

As a whole, the North American church finds its overall attendance on the decline. It is not so much that the church is “losing” people, as that it is not gaining new generations, i.e. Millennials, at the rate that the older generations are dying off. One of the first to recognize and research the downward trend in church attendance by younger generations was The Barna Organization. This organization has spent the past twenty years studying Millennials, and its research notes that, “Only about one-fifth of Millennials (20%) say going to church is important, about one-third (30%) think it isn’t important at all and the rest fall somewhere in the middle, expressing ambivalence toward church attendance.”<sup>8</sup> On the attendance front, it is clear that the church is not winning over Millennials to impact the world.

However, the label of “ambivalent” best describes this generations religious climate, not hostile. The flight of Millennials from the institutions that have historically supported, defended, and practiced religion, has caused many to assume that they are not pursuing religion. In reality though, it appears that instead of giving up on religion entirely, “Millennials think and talk more about faith, and do more with it, than older people realize. It matters to them. In one poll, teens cited religion as the second-strongest influence in their lives, just behind parents, but ahead of teachers, boy/girlfriends, peers, and media.”<sup>9</sup> So it seems that Millennials are simply living out, thinking about, and practicing it differently. Howe and Strauss argue this point in stating that Religion is an important factor in Millennials’ lives, and in order to fully understand their spiritual climate, one must do more than ask and answer the question, “Are they going to church?” This short-sighted inquiry only examines one aspect of how religion is practiced; it does not define it in its entirety.

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<sup>8</sup> “5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to the Church,” accessed December 6, 2013, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/635-5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church#.UsI28Xk3-z2>.

<sup>9</sup> Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 234.

Millennials are abandoning attendance of religious establishments, but not spirituality as a whole, as studies show “three out of four Millennials say they are spiritual but not religious. If you state you are spiritual, most people will take that at face value. If you state that you are religious, you will have to define what you believe. Most Millennials are unable to define their beliefs.”<sup>10</sup> While this quote further supports that Millennials are indeed interested in spiritual matters (albeit unable to explain why), it also delineates the terms religious—a word primarily associated with denomination or faith—and spiritual—a loose expression that is broad and shallow. Millennials favor the verbiage of, “I am spiritual” far more than the verbiage of, “I am religious.” Even though Millennials are not actively participating in organized religion, its presence and influence is still evident in their professions and beliefs.

Understanding that Millennials are interested in spiritual things but disappearing from the pews leads to the logical question of, “Why are they not practicing or engaging in congregations or other religious institutions?” Upon reviewing the literature that addresses this question, one idea repeatedly arises: Millennials do not feel like the church is providing the mechanisms for community or mentoring to facilitate their growth. They are tired of waiting for the church to address its lack of leadership and developmental growth opportunities; therefore Millennials have begun to develop faith-based learning within their own contexts.

This knowledge brings several important questions about Millennials and their interaction with the church to the light. Foremost, how does the church reach Millennials? If the church were to develop and implement mentoring programs to reach Millennials and produce its future leaders, would Millennials begin to reengage the church? If such a program were established, what would it look like? Are there current mentorship programs—church or parachurch—that are being utilized and what can be learned by investigating these programs? The questions are many and call for deeper study.

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<sup>10</sup> Rainer and Jess Rainer, *Millennials*.

### Statement of Research Topic

Because this generations impact on society is undeniable and yet the church is struggling to reach them, this study will investigate the role of mentoring and its effect on reaching and maturing Millennials to the Christian Faith and its communities. Richard Osmer's four steps for practical theology will be followed as the outline for the research process; the study will describe, interpret, gather, and analyze the development of Millennials as leaders through the process of mentoring in the local church:

Research Question 1: *How does the process of mentoring develop future leaders?*

Research Question 2: *What is the biblical and theological framework for mentoring in raising up future leaders?*

Research Question 3: *What can be learned about the relationship between Millennials and the local church from precedent literature?*

Research Question 4: *How can mentoring be used for discipling students through the use of mentors shape future leaders?*<sup>11</sup>

Each of the research questions will form a specific chapter of the study. Chapter two will examine how the process of mentoring develops future leaders. Once the value of mentorship and a developmental tool is validated, the third chapter will delve into the ways that mentoring has been used in Scripture to raise up future leaders. Working upon the assumption that mentoring produces leaders and that it has strong biblical roots, the fourth chapter will look at the church's current spiritual climate and relationship with Millennials. Finally, the fifth chapter will assimilate the data gleaned from the first three research questions and accordingly present a framework for building and replicating mentoring relationships with Millennials in order to reach and develop leaders for the church and its future.

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<sup>11</sup> Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2008), 28.

### **Limitations and Definitions**

The scope of research used for this project must be clearly understood to ensure for proper interpretation of its findings. To understand the scope of research and the limitations we will first look at the background of this researcher, distinctives and locations of the two congregations used in this study, and the subset of the generation of Millennials who were utilized for this research. Upon understanding the background and definitions, it paves the way to assessing some of the limitations of this project.

The background of this researcher will indicate certain biases in this project, thus a snapshot is needed of them. This project's researcher is a thirty-nine-year-old, white male who was born and raised in Dallas, TX. This researcher did not grow up in a Christian household nor did he attend church until late into high school. Upon entering college, the researcher spent a year investigating faith issues; during his sophomore year, he made the declaration that Jesus Christ is his Lord and Savior. At that time, the researcher began to be mentored through the local church, became involved in several campus ministries at the University of Texas A&M, and upon graduation, spent several years working as a project manager for a large commercial construction firm in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex before deciding to enter into seminary and pursue vocational ministry.

The first congregation utilized in this project was a non-denominational church of about 1000 non-collegiate congregants located in the college town of Norman, OK-where the University of Oklahoma resides. This congregation was primarily white with approximately 15% being from Black, Asian, or American Indian backgrounds. When arriving at this church, the college ministry that existed was primarily about twenty to thirty college students, and the church had a large desire for the college ministry to grow numerically. This ministry, at the time, had no mentoring program instituted nor did it have any real intergenerational overlap with the church at large. Over approximately seven years the college ministry grew to a population of around 300 students who served in capacities both inside and outside the college ministry area. The growth of this



ministry can be attributed to many things, not limited to but including: partnerships with local parachurch ministries, the development of a leadership program as well as an internship program, and the opportunity to be paired with a mentor who was thirty years old or older.

The second congregation utilized for this project's research was a Southern Baptist church of roughly 900 non-collegiate congregants located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama where the University of Alabama resides. This congregation was also primarily white with approximately 10% of their congregants being Black, Asian, or other ethnic backgrounds. This researcher's arrival to this congregation was unique in that the church had been without a college pastor for a year and a half. During this year and a half gap, where an active search for a college pastor was being pursued, the college ministry was primarily run and sustained by the oversight of the church's college committee and the support staff of the college ministry who had remained employed after the previous college pastor left. Upon this researcher's arrival, the ministry was made up of 400 to 500 students.

Although there are some similarities in size and race, one of the primary differences between these two congregations was that although there was a year and a half gap between college pastors, the college ministry at congregation two had already implemented a type of mentoring program for the college ministry. This mentoring program was group based and led by college students. Every student who was involved in the college ministry leadership team had to be involved in a mentoring group with other students. These groups were good in that they provided an opportunity to train and equip students in areas of evangelism and discipleship, however, they ended up being more of an accountability group. Requiring leadership students to attend these groups, while also requiring leadership students to attend a small group as well, created tension in many students minds and caused them to ask, "What is the point of the mentoring group when the same needs are met in the small groups."

The students' frustration about the current mentoring program's limitations helped create openness to change in the area of mentorship-namely the utilization of adults as mentors instead of peers. At this researcher's first leadership meeting, there was a short survey given to the leadership students to assess where they believed the ministry was at, along with, any suggestions for changes needed. Largely, most students did not like the current mentoring structure and preferred to have adults involved in the mentoring program. Again, this information was advantageous for this study as it reinforced the idea that Millennials in college desired to be in growing relationships with older adults.

With the above descriptions given of the researcher and the two congregations studied, we can examine some of the limitations of this project. One of the first arises from the researcher's church background. Since he did not "grow up in church," there are limitations on both perspectives and inferences-specifically involving others who grew up in a church congregation as well as those who grew up in a Christian household and attended church with their families. Geography also limits this research. Because both congregations are located in the evangelical, American Southeast, the broadness of this research and its application to other cultural and geographic areas within the United States is yet to be proven. A third limitation of this project that cannot be overlooked is the age demographic of the research set; it is limited to Millennials. When statements are made about mentoring, it should be assumed that these claims do not relate to all generations in the same way. For example, while this research will explore the development of future leaders in Millennials through mentorship, there will be no discussion given to whether mentoring may or may not also produce leaders in other generational subgroups.

Understanding the potential limitations of this project allows us to understand that although this research will examine the implementation of a Millennial mentoring program within the church, its results will be localized. Data was obtained from Millennials involved in mentoring programs in university communities in Oklahoma,

Texas, and Alabama. Thus, without further testing, there is no way to ensure the same program would work as well in regions outside the South and Midwest areas of the United States or within other generations.

### **Research Methods**

The research used for this project will be a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods; the nature of the project demands both styles of inquiry. Quantitative analysis will reveal concrete items such as numbers of people completing the mentoring program, the duration of the program, and the quantity of programs studied. The qualitative side of the research provides answers for questions such as: What does being a leader look like? Are the program participants now part of the local church? What does leading in the church look like?

In order to research the validity of the claim that mentoring is an effective method for growing Millennial church leaders, sample data will be gathered by focusing on Millennials who currently are—or have had in the past—been a part of a mentorship program. Data will be gleaned by utilizing interviews, questionnaires, and testing. These three research methods should provide valuable and useful information about creating a quality mentorship program for congregations to use in order to produce Millennial leaders.

The research process will begin with semi-structured interviews of Millennials—both those who are considered leaders within their local church and those who are not involved in leadership at their local church. Each interview will consist of standardized and unstandardized questions. Standardized questions will ask basic information such as race, parental economic status, education, years spent in leadership positions in college, and years in leadership positions post-college. These questions will allow for deciphering if and how mentorship is affected by race, economic status, and/or education. The interviews will also contain open-ended questions such as, but not limited to: Tell us

what ways you are practicing leadership today? How have you been mentored in leadership? If you were to personally develop a program to lead people from college to where you are today, how would you do it? The intention of each open question will be to listen for similarities and overlap in answers about mentorship in order to develop questions for the next phase of research—the survey.

Once a thorough sample set has been obtained from the interviews, the data will be analyzed; the common themes found within it will be used to create a questionnaire. The questionnaire will poll a wide range of college students and gauge their reactions and thoughts on various methods and types of mentoring. For instance, questions might pertain to the frequency of mentorship meetings—would they be open to meeting once a week? Or they might ask about types of mentors—would they prefer mentors who are serving in similar contexts with them? The survey questions will provide feedback and begin to lay out a framework to craft a church leadership development program that focuses on mentoring Millennials.

After the answers from the questionnaires are compiled and organized, the information they provide will be applied and tested within a leadership development program aimed at Millennials in two congregations in the American Midwest and Southeast. Monitoring a sample set of Millennials who are participating in the mentorship as well as data about their pursuit and desire for leadership within the church. From this information, the effectiveness of the thesis project and its claims will be reviewed.

### **Theological Framework**

All things tested and practiced within the Christian community should be viewed through a solid theological framework—this project will be no different. The theological and biblical basis of this project will utilize Scripture for two main purposes. The first will be to illustrate how mentoring was used by our spiritual fathers to train up new

generations, and the second will be to provide some guiding principles as to how orthodoxy can be utilized in praxis.

Studying Scripture quickly reveals that mentoring is a key piece of the biblical narrative and is deeply entrenched in both the cultural contexts as well as the language of Scripture. Oswald Sanders writes, “A disciple is simply ‘a learner.’ The word comes from a root that means ‘thought accompanied by endeavor.’ So, a disciple of Christ can be defined as ‘a learner of Jesus who accepts the teaching of his Master, not only in belief but in lifestyle.’ It involves acceptance of the views and practices of the Teacher and obedience to His commands.”<sup>12</sup> With this definition in mind, it is easy to find instances of discipleship, or mentorship, in both the Old and New Testaments. According to Dallas Willard, “The word ‘disciple’ occurs 269 times in the New Testament. ‘Christian’ is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus—in a situation where it was no longer possible to regard them as a sect of Jews (Acts 11:26).”<sup>13</sup> Willard denotes that the primary biblical word that defines a mentoring relationship with Jesus is the word disciple. However, it is important to understand that while the word disciple is strictly a New Testament word, the concept is no different than the practice found in the Old Testament. The focus of the learning in both the Old and New Testaments is God Himself. In the Old Testament it was God the Father, and in the New Testament it is God the Son.

Mentorship is a critical aspect of learning in the Old and New Testaments. Although the church is seeing people leave at an unprecedented pace, God, in His sovereignty, has placed a generation with unique characteristics and abilities at the church’s doorstep. Millennials respond to mentorship, a method of raising up disciples that has been in place from the beginning of time.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship: with Study Guide* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1994), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), Kindle.

### **Precedent Research**

Research and literature about Christian leadership development inundates libraries and journals today; the material focusing on Millennials is no less overwhelming. If the focus of this project zeroed in on either of these topics independently, it would definitely be redundant. However, this thesis project is not replicative because it seeks to integrate these two separate areas of study. The goal of this thesis project is to both discover and analyze where information on Christian leadership development and research on Millennials overlap, and from the overlays, utilize the knowledge gained to build a framework for congregations to go about developing Christian leaders within Millennials.

As mentioned above, there is an ample supply of literature regarding the independent areas of Millennials and leadership development; there is also a fair amount of information available on leadership development for Millennials. Literature that deals directly with leadership development for Millennials within the local church is sparse however. Because of this, the primary precedent literature used in this study encompasses three main areas: defining and understanding Millennials, examining the condition of the church, and discussing why mentoring is an ideal fit for reaching Millennials.

The feasibility of the project is achievable, but utilizing interviews, questionnaires, and testing will require an intense amount of time. Because of current employment contexts, subjects for interviews and questionnaires are readily available and this portion of testing should go quickly. The testing portion of the project will focus primarily on the implementation, training, and launching of a mentoring program for Millennials within the local church. Enacting the mentorship program and determining its efficacy can be done after the span of one college semester. Obviously, the long-term effectiveness of the mentoring program, over the course of several years, cannot be fully grasped in this study, as the time span for this project has its own time-frame limitations. However, despite the short time frame for testing, the opportunity to formulate a mentoring program for churches to utilize and engage Millennials is worth the risk with the upside being the

opportunity learn, engage, and hopefully provide overall insight into raising up Millennial leaders within the local church. It is with each of these factors now understood that we move forward, however, the first step in moving forward is looking at the makeup and characteristics of Millennials. This understanding will begin to take place in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research and literature about Christian leadership development and the subject of Millennials fill the pages of books and journals. If this project were to focus on either of these two topics, it would be redundant. However, the goal of this literature review is to both discover and analyze where information on leadership development and research on Millennials overlap, thereby building a framework that can direct and aide the church in developing Christian leaders within Millennials.

When studying the wealth of available knowledge pertaining to both Christian leadership development and Millennials, it seems best to break up the literature into three basic groups of study, which will later be synthesized for this project. The first area of investigation will focus on defining elements of Millennials. Questions such as, (1) “Who is a Millennial?” (2) “What characteristics are attributed to them?” and (3) “How do Millennials respond to society at large and how does society deal with this generation?” will be addressed in this section. The interaction of Millennials and the church composes the next section of research. This literature looks at inquiries such as (1) “How do Millennials view the Church?” and (2) “How is the Church interacting, or failing to interact, with Millennials?” Leadership development will be the final area explored; the content in this area will delve into the process of leadership development and how it influences and is influenced by Millennials.

#### **Who are Millennials?**

In order to establish a working framework to guide Christian leadership development with Millennials, this literature review begins by laying a foundation for understanding exactly who Millennials are and what makes them unique from past generations. This section looks at the literature that describes this generation. The content below seeks to answer three main questions:



(1) “Who is a Millennial?” (2) “What are some characteristics that define Millennials?” and, (3) “What do these qualities mean for society at large as it interacts with this generation?”

Howe and Strauss first coined the term, “Millennial,”<sup>1</sup> to refer to a particular generational cohort in the United States. This cohort encompasses anyone born between the years of 1980 and 2000. They are the fourth generational category that has been named and studied since the concept of exploring generations and their characteristics begun. The table below contains a simple summary of some of the qualities defining the four generations that scientists’ study; this chart can be found in the book, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How the Millennial Generation is Shaking up the Workplace*.

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14. <sup>1</sup> Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage, 2000),

Table 1: Generational Characteristics <sup>2</sup>

	<b>Millennials</b>	<b>Gen Xers</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Traditionalists</b>
Time Span	1980-2001	1965-1979	1946-1964	1925-1945
Current U.S. Residents, Census Bureau Estimate	92 million	62 million	78.3 million	38.6 million
Key Historical Events	Columbine High School shootings, September 11 terrorist attacks, Enron and other corporate scandals, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Hurricane Katrina	AIDS epidemic, space shuttle Challenger catastrophe, fall of the Berlin Wall, Oklahoma City bombing, Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky scandal	Vietnam War, assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., first man on the moon, Kent State killings, Watergate	Great Depression, Pearl Harbor, World War II, Korean War, Cold war era, Cuban Missile Crises
Traits	Entitled, optimistic, civic minded, close parental involvement, values work-life balance, impatient, multitasking, team oriented	Self-reliant, adaptable, cynical, distrusts authority, resourceful, entrepreneurial, technology savvy	Workaholic, idealistic, competitive, loyal, materialistic, seeks personal fulfillment, values titles and the corner office	Patriotic, dependable, conformist, respects authority, rigid, socially and financially conservative, solid work ethic

Table 1 describes the historical time period that encapsulates Millennials, but it does not explain why this particular generation has been given that name. Answering this question proves

<sup>2</sup> Ron Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How Millennial Generation Is Shaking up the Workplace* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 5.

to be a bit more difficult. Different authors have called this generation by all kinds of differing names in an effort to classify them by a singular characteristic. The names have ranged “Generation Y” to “The Net Generation, Millennials, the Dotcoms, and the Thumb Generation (referring to their dexterity with remote controls, computer keyboards and mobile phones).”<sup>3</sup> However, the most predominant nomenclature used to describe those born between 1980 and 2001 is, “Millennial” (which will be used in this work) with a close second going to the term, “Generation Y.” The tag Millennial has been embraced because this particular generation was the first to graduate high school in the new millennium. The second name, “Generation Y,” is commonly accepted simply because the generation directly preceding this one was “Generation X.”

Now that the parameters of both time period and name have been described, exploration of the emotional and psychological characteristics that define Millennials can begin. One of the primary traits of Millennials is their extreme optimism and confidence in their own ability. Howe and Strauss reveal that when “Compared to Xer teens a decade ago...today’s teens are more upbeat about the world in which they are growing up. Nine in ten describe themselves as ‘happy,’ ‘confident,’ and ‘positive.’”<sup>4</sup> Rainer and Rainer illustrate the optimistic nature of Millennials through a survey in which they were asked to respond to the following statement: “I believe I can do something great.” The findings were as follows: “About 60 percent agreed strongly, and another 36 percent agreed somewhat...That’s almost every respondent, 96 percent total!”<sup>5</sup> It is safe to say that Millennials are not only optimistic, but their optimism has led them to believe that they can have a significant impact on the world.

Another important quality of Millennials is the sheer number of them; they are by far the largest generation to walk the earth yet. Because of their size, they will interact with and

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<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation* (Crowns Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2006), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Jess Rainer, *Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2011), Kindle.

influence all aspects of society at large. For instance, the effect of their size has been illustrated already in the voting turnout and influence on the presidential elections of 2008 and 2012. If their impact was so forcefully felt in the isolated incident of an election think of how it will affect the workforce in the coming years. Martin writes, “In 2016 Millennials overtook Gen Xers as the largest generation in America’s workforce, and they have overtaken Baby Boomers as the largest generation in American history.”<sup>6</sup>

Along with their size, it is important to note that they are also the most racially and ethnically diverse generation when compared to their previous generation cohorts. Rainer and Rainer write, “The Millennials represent the most racially and ethnically diverse nation in America’s history. This is also the generation with the lowest proportion of Caucasians.”<sup>7</sup> This shift of ethnicity and race should be taken into account when identifying traits of this generation as they look altogether different than previous generations.

When combined, these key identifying characteristics look like this: Millennials are the most optimistic, the largest numerically, the most ethnically diverse, and the most educated generation existing today.<sup>8</sup> Rainer writes, “Millennials are on the path to becoming the most educated generation in America’s history. Already their rate of receiving undergraduate degrees has surpassed all previous generations.”<sup>9</sup> Imagine the impact that leadership development within this generation could have on the world. Imagine the amount of change that this type of optimism, combined with this sheer size of numbers, and mixed with this amount of education can bring. Rainer and Rainer write about their clear potential for impact, “Three out of four Millennials believe it is their role in life to serve others. If 75 percent of Millennials begin to serve others, the impact for the future will be significant.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Chris Martin, *Ministering to Millennials: Understand. Reach. Equip.* (Spring Hill: Rainer Publishing, 2018), Kindle.

<sup>7</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>8</sup> Pew Research Center, *Millennials in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with Friends* (March 2014), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>10</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

While the attitude, size, and education level of Millennials are the three most recognized characteristics of this specific generation, they are not the only defining or important attributes of them. Another highly important trait to understand Millennials is that their values are often paradoxical. For instance, they are not strangers to drugs and alcohol, but they also have strong desires to eat organically, monitor their nutrition, and be healthy and fit. They desire to be “financially and materially comfortable,”<sup>11</sup> but they are often disillusioned upon entering the workplace at an entry level job and consequently never stay in one place long enough to move up the ladder toward greater financial security.

They have a strong desire to be married and hold the traditional concept of marriage with very high regard,<sup>12</sup> and many Millennials believe they will only be married once.<sup>13</sup> Yet, most Millennials are waiting longer and longer to actually get married. Rainer writes, “In 1970 about 44 percent of eighteen to twenty-five-year-old Boomers were married. Today only 15 percent of Millennials in that age group are married. And the average age of first marriages has gone up from 20.8 for women in 1970 to 25.5 today. For men the average age of first marriages has increased from 23.2 to 27.5 over the same period.”<sup>14</sup> More and more Millennials are seeking and finding safety, security, and advice from their parents—a quality that stands in stark contrast to Generation X who came before them.

What researchers are seeing is that, “More teens than ever seek to have a good lifelong relationship with their parents.”<sup>15</sup> And yet, while Millennials are heavily influenced by and dependent upon their parents, they have little desire to follow in their parents’ footsteps.<sup>16</sup> The desire for strong relationships is not exclusive to family ties among Millennials. They have an

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<sup>11</sup> Christian Smith, *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 93.

<sup>12</sup> Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais, *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 208.

<sup>13</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>14</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>15</sup> Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 179.

<sup>16</sup> Huntley, *The World According to Y*, 20.

ardent desire for community in all areas of life, and this generation does not value the idea that everyone is in it for themselves and independence is something to be prized. This high regard for relationships is exhibited in both how Millennials learn and work; they desire collaborative learning and community work environments more than any generation before them.<sup>17</sup> Once again, however, this value clashes with the reality that they are the most technologically savvy generation yet, and often remove themselves from deep meaningful face to face relationships because of their technological dependence.<sup>18</sup>

These paradoxes translate into the truth that Millennials are not easily typecast. As soon as they are put into a box, they morph and change categories. Ultimately, the best way to view Millennials is to understand that their most prized desire is “balance.” They want to be healthy, but not too healthy to have some fun and experiment. This generation wants to be financially independent and secure, yet they do not want work to dictate their lives and consume their time. Millennials want to be married, but if they are going to be married, they want to make sure it works for the long haul.<sup>19</sup> They love their families and cherish their advice; however, in the end they do not want to look or act like them.<sup>20</sup> Millennials wants to learn, work, and live in community, but they are also a generation of Facebook, Twitter, and other technologies that remove them from face to face interactions.<sup>21</sup> This generation must be appreciated for its balances and must be approached with an understanding of the seeming paradoxes that exist within it.<sup>22</sup>

Millennials have been defined both by physical and emotional parameters, so what do these qualities and characteristics mean for society at large? What does this mean for other generations who are watching the largest generation to date move into workplaces, teams, and

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<sup>17</sup> Ron Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, 125.

<sup>18</sup> Helen Fox, *Their Highest Vocation: Social Justice and Millennial Generation* (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2012), 67.

<sup>19</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>20</sup> Huntley, *The World According to Y*, 20.

<sup>21</sup> Fox, *Their Highest Vocation*, 64.

<sup>22</sup> Fox, *Their Highest Vocation*, 10-11.

communities? The research about Millennials and their interaction with society at large offers three core truths that one must understand to interact well with this particular generation. The foremost is acknowledging that Millennials deeply desire to be a part of something significant. Millennials are described in, “Study after study as optimistic, idealistic, empowered, ambitious, confident, committed, and passionate. They are assured about their own futures and, in many cases, the future of the world.”<sup>23</sup> In order to appeal to this generation, organizations must promote what they are for and not necessarily what they do. For instance, Winograd and Hais write, “Eighty percent of Millennials rated the, ‘opportunity to have an impact on the world’ as an important consideration for choosing an employer.”<sup>24</sup> Nine out of ten Millennials believe they can make a significant impact in their lifetime; consequently, those who interact with this generation will have to become strategic about what they are about and what they are for if they are going to leverage Millennials.<sup>25</sup>

Another important truth to consider when working with Millennials is that not only do they want their organization, group, or business to be part of something significant, they also want to be aided in that process. Millennials are some of the highest achievers the workplace has seen to date. However, individuals in this generation also understand that they do not know it all, and therefore, they have a high desire to be mentored, coached, and given regular feedback about their performance within the workplace. Alsop writes that Millennials are, “Clamoring for more coaching, training, and mentoring programs. After making job offers to college graduates, some recruiters are surprised when students immediately ask how often their company does performance reviews and whether they provide mentors.”<sup>26</sup> Rainer and Rainer expound upon Millennial’s desire for mentorship and write that what Millennials are actually stating when

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<sup>23</sup> Fox, *Their Highest Vocation*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Mr. Morley Winograd and Mr. Michael D. Hais, *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 151.

<sup>25</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>26</sup> Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, 99.

requesting a mentor is that, “We are teachable. Although we are confident, we are willing to learn. An experienced leader has value. Millennials understand this value, and we will listen to a mentor who has chosen to invest in us.”<sup>27</sup> Those who interact with Millennials must value and capitalize on the reality that because this generation is high achieving and has a strong desire to be coached and developed, their transition and enculturation into an organization and its ideals can go much more smoothly than the previous generations who simply wanted to find a chair and start working.

The final fact that groups who want to appeal to this generation must consider is the reality that in order to ignite Millennials to their full potential, the workplace experience and dynamic must change. In the past, the mantra chanted by employers was, “Live to work,” but this generation cries, “Work to live,” and values freedom and flexibility over giving their lives to a job. Yes, they desire to be part of something significant and to make change happen, but their job will not be an all-consuming purpose like those of generations past. Huntley writes that the reason Millennials will not be held captive by a job is that, “Millennials are living witnesses to the personal cost of their parent’s workaholicism—broken marriages, absentee parenting, stress-related illnesses—and have been left disillusioned and determined to achieve a balance in their own lives.”<sup>28</sup> Because Millennials value team work and flexibility, to best harness the potential of this generation, groups must provide more relational avenues and flexibility in work spaces and time.

Though the truths that organizations must take into account about Millennials look amazing at first glance—who does not desire a high achieving, coachable team player who simply desires a little bit of flexibility? —there are also negative implications as well. For instance, though Millennials desire to be a part of a company that has a significant vision and a strong emphasis on mentoring, there is a high and quick turnover rate of employment for Millennials. Alsop attributes this to the fact that, “Millennials want their dream job as early as

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<sup>27</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>28</sup> Huntley, *The World According to Y*, 99.



possible, but entry-level positions are seldom dream jobs. As young people encounter the realities of the workaday world, many are quickly disillusioned and want to continue exploring right away.”<sup>29</sup> Even if an organization draws in this optimistic and achieving generation and spends much time and effort on developing and mentoring them, it will quickly lose Millennials if they feel they are not being allowed to have significant work or make a significant contribution to a purpose. Another example of a negative impact of a positive quality is that while Millennials are relational and work well in teams, they often lack the ability to make decisions on their own. If a Millennial’s dependence on community inhibits autonomous action, problems will obviously arise in any environment. Alsop writes, “Many Millennials struggle with independent thinking, decision making, and risk taking. They are especially flummoxed by unexpected, ambiguous challenges, the kind that business is all about.”<sup>30</sup> It appears that in order to harness this optimistic, achievement-oriented, group-centric generation, the key is to not just give them meaningful work, a purpose, and mentoring in an organization but to also make sure that they are empowered and equipped to make decisions outside of their team units.

Even though these core truths can be used to direct the way that society and the groups within it engage Millennials, it is important to remember that each generation has strengths and weaknesses. To best utilize Millennials for their full potential, those who engage them need to harness their strengths such as their high achieving tendencies, their desire for mentorship, and their refusal to be defined by work alone by seeking flexibility. As for their weaknesses, the church can either take steps to improve upon them or find ways to work around them.

In summary, this is who Millennials are: the youngest, most optimistic, educated, largest, paradoxical, achieving, coachable, team-centric, and flexible generation that the world has yet to see. These truths all point to the fact that they cannot and should not be overlooked when it comes to developing them into Christian leaders. If the church does not develop Millennials, it

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<sup>29</sup> Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Alsop, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, 116.

will have missed a great opportunity to harness their ability and passion to significantly change the world.

### **Millennials and the Church**

Now that Millennials and their key qualities have been explored, the research will explore this generation's interaction with the church before proposing how to develop Christian leadership within Millennial population. This portion of the chapter will examine three areas: the spiritual climate of Millennials, how this generation perceives American congregations, and how the data from these areas impacts churches that interact with them. Unless otherwise noted, when addressing each of these topics, the term "church" represents the American evangelical Christianity worldwide and the word "religion" or "religious" represents all faiths and creeds existing today.<sup>31; 32</sup>

The research now turns to the current spiritual climate among Millennials. An indisputable fact about this generation is that Millennials are walking away from the church in larger numbers than any other generation before them. Sarah Cunningham writes, "Not only are twenty somethings' pews getting cold, so is our commitment to religion in general."<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, a 2004 Gallup poll reports, "Younger Americans are more likely than those who are older to claim no religion."<sup>34</sup> Researchers at Barna agree, "Only about one-fifth of Millennials (20%) say going to church is important, about one-third (30%) think it isn't important at all and the rest fall somewhere in the middle, expressing ambivalence toward church attendance."<sup>35</sup> Barna's statement and their usage of the word "ambivalence" form the best picture

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<sup>31</sup> See Packer's "Six fundamentals to evangelicalism" in J. I. Packer, *The Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem: An Analysis* (Oxford: Latimer House, 1978), 49-88.

<sup>32</sup> See McGrath's work on tracing the evangelical worldwide movement in Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995), 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> Sarah Cunningham, *Dear Church: Letters from a Disillusioned Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 18.

<sup>34</sup> "5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to the Church." accessed December 6, 2013, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/635-5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church#.UsI28Xk3-z2>

<sup>35</sup> "5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to the Church."

of the religious climate among Millennials. Much of the data concerning Millennials and religious institutions center around the fact that this specific generation is no longer attending religious institutions.

However, though Millennials might hold religious or spiritual values, they do not seem to be interacting with religion or spirituality in the same ways that older generations have in the past. As addressed in the previous section defining Millennials, they are a highly relational generation. In view of this quality, it makes sense that most Millennial spiritual conversations, interactions, and decisions come from peer influences and not religious institutions. For instance, McNeal writes, “People will accept help in shaping their spiritual path. In fact, they welcome it, especially from people they respect and trust, who seem to have their best interests at heart.”<sup>36</sup> Winograd and Hais echo the truth that Millennials are indeed religious but practice their beliefs in a different way, writing,

Although the large majority of Millennials, therefore, could be described as spiritual or believers, the members of the generation are significantly less likely than older Americans to be members of a specific religious faith and to participate in traditional religious rituals. In fact, 72 percent of them describe themselves as “more spiritual than religious.” About one in five Millennials (18%) have moved away from the denominations of their childhood and are completely unaffiliated with any traditional faith; one-quarter of all Millennials are currently unaffiliated with any denomination. Some might argue that the lack of commitment to a religious faith stems simply from the skepticism of youth. In fact, however, Millennials are twice as likely to be unaffiliated as were Boomers in the 1970s, when the members of that cohort were young adults. Millennials are also one-and-one-half times more likely to be unattached to a religious denomination than Gen-Xers were in the 1990s, when they were the same age as today’s Millennial Generation. Millennials are also less likely than older generations to attend religious services weekly (33%), or to read Scripture, pray, and meditate regularly.<sup>37</sup>

There is a decline in Millennial participation within religious institutions in the United States, but this fact does not necessarily imply that Millennials have left religion altogether.<sup>38</sup> It

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<sup>36</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*, Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 98.

<sup>37</sup> Winograd and Hais, *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking*, 206.

<sup>38</sup> David Kinnamen, *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity...and Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 67.

could also indicate that the way in which Millennials are living out, thinking about, and practicing religion is simply different. According to Howe and Strauss “Millennials think and talk more about faith, and do more with it, than older people realize. It matters to them. In one poll, teens cited religion as the second-strongest influence in their lives, just behind parents, but ahead of teachers, boy/girlfriends, peers, and media.”<sup>39</sup> Clearly religion is an important factor in Millennials’ lives, but it appears that in order to fully understand Millennial spiritual climate, one must do more than simply ask and answer the question, “Are they going to church?” This inquiry only examines one aspect of how religion is practiced; it does not define it in its entirety. Rainer and Rainer write, “Three out of four Millennials say they are spiritual but not religious. If you state you are spiritual, most people will take that at face value. If you state that you are religious, you will have to define what you believe. Most Millennials are unable to define their beliefs.”<sup>40</sup> This citation delineates between the terms religious—a word primarily associated with denomination or faith—and spiritual, a loose expression that is broad and shallow; when it comes to Millennials, it appears that they favor the verbiage of “I am spiritual” far more than the verbiage of “I am religious.” Even though Millennials are not actively participating in organized religion, its presence and influence are still evident in their professions and beliefs.

The spiritual climate of Millennials can be summed up in a simple statement: this generation is not practicing organized religion in the same manner as past generations, but they still consider religion to be important and impactful. Furthermore, their lack of participation is not indicative of anti-belief, but of their personal desire for the same freedom and flexibility to carry over into their religious practice.<sup>41</sup> While the verbiage by which they define their beliefs has changed from the term “religious” to “spiritual,” the context in which Millennials learn, discuss and grow has also changed from traditional institutions, like a church, to communal

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<sup>39</sup> Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 234.

<sup>40</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>41</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

settings. This shift in belief and practice systems is highlighted by Kinnaman and Hawkins in writing, “What’s the difference between young Christians and older believers? It’s their context. The younger Christian community is ‘doing theology’ in an environment different from that of the past; not everyone within the community connects with the historic faith’s truth claims.”<sup>42</sup> Though they still esteem religion and believe in its value, Millennials are becoming increasingly more absent from organized participation in religion.

The obvious disappearance of Millennials from pews leads to the question, “Why are they not practicing or engaging in the Church or other religious institutions?” How do congregations engage and draw in a generation that does not behave like any of their predecessors? In reviewing the literature which addresses this question, the assertion that repeatedly arose was that Millennials’ main issue with the church is that it is not meeting their needs—it does not revolve around or primarily focus on them, their personalities, their beliefs, or their preferences. Though this assertion seems incredibly self-centered, there is a heaviness to it as well. Millennials are frustrated with the church, and this section will review three main concerns that emerged while reviewing literature that focused on Millennials and the church: Millennials do not feel the church is providing community or mentoring them, the church is not changing the world—at least not in a way that they can be a part, and the church is not answering the questions which they are asking.

As evidenced in the first section of this paper, community is a high priority for Millennials and upon examination of the traditional church service, little or no community interaction is found. Attendees come, sit, sing, listen, and then leave; for a generation that wants to engage, be heard, and provide feedback, this format can be a huge obstacle to church involvement. According to McNeal, “The program-driven church often focuses on teaching, in

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<sup>42</sup> David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), Kindle.

an autocratic manner, especially for adults. The delivery of the Bible lesson or sermon occupies a large part of the agenda, both in worship and in religious education venues...People are then left with the job of applying what they have ‘learned’ in these contexts.”<sup>43</sup> For a generation that wants to function in teams, struggles with making independent decisions, and has a strong need for peer input, being left alone to try to understand and put into practice what they heard spoken to them on a Sunday morning is overwhelming and unappealing.

Millennials’ need for interaction and community is also recognizable in their desire for mentorship within the church. Again, as addressed in the previous section of this chapter, Millennials have a high need and desire to be mentored—not taught at or spoken to, but to have a person who listens, understands, and provides feedback. Kinnaman and Hawkins write, “Most young Protestants and Catholics do not recall having a meaningful friendship with an adult through their church, and more than four out of five never had an adult mentor.”<sup>44</sup> On the flip side of this statistic, an article by The Barna Group states this about Millennials, “Those who stay [in church] are twice as likely to have a close personal friendship with an adult inside the church.”<sup>45</sup> Undoubtedly, community is paramount for Millennials, and many feel as if the church is nourishing this hunger within them.

Another issue that Millennials have with the traditional church is a skepticism about whether or not the institution of the church is actually changing the world. This generation wants to be a part of changing the world and truly believes that they can impact the future. Moreover, their personal role plays a part in the change. This desire translates to the church as well—they want to see how the church is impacting the world and how they can be a part of it. However, “Most Millennial Christians see local churches as business as usual, focused inwardly, more concerned about the needs of the members than the needs of the community and the nations. The

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<sup>43</sup> McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 101.

<sup>44</sup> Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*.

<sup>45</sup> “5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to the Church.”

bad news is that most American churches are not attractive to Millennials because of the inward focus of these congregations.”<sup>46</sup> Millennials want to be agents of change, and if the institution they are a part of is not pushing for change, shaping the culture around them, or not including them in the process, they will leave without hesitation.

A final angst that Millennials have in their relationship with the church is that they often feel like they are not heard and that the questions they are asking are not being answered: “Fully one-third of young Christians (36 percent) agree that ‘I don’t feel that I can ask my most pressing life questions in church.’ One out of ten (10 percent) put it more bluntly: ‘I am not allowed to talk about my doubts in church.’”<sup>47</sup> Millennials have a strong desire to be heard and to engage with others in dialogue and community. As of right now, most do not feel like the traditional church provides opportunity for that. Kinnaman continues, “This statistic signals one of the challenges the next generations of Christians bring to the church. They are used to ‘having a say’ in everything related to their lives.”<sup>48</sup> In order for Millennials to return to the church, they must feel as if they have a voice and the freedom to use it.

The harsh reality that Millennials are exposing is that the church’s culture has not changed with this emerging generation. The church is relying on how it has served parishioners in the past, but this new generation is demanding community, mentorship, impacting the world around them, and the right to be heard. Unless changes are made, Millennials will continue to turn away and seek community and guidance elsewhere.

So, what can the church do with the combination of Millennials beliefs in spirituality and their frustrations with the traditional church? The literature that addresses this question holds a simple answer: improve in the areas that are causing Millennials to abandon the church. Even though the answer is simple, implementation requires a shift in congregational cultures and

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<sup>46</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>47</sup> Kinnaman with Hawkins, *You Lost Me*.

<sup>48</sup> Kinnaman with Hawkins, *You Lost Me*.

systems, which is difficult to say the least. Congregations must confront two key areas in order to reach out to this generation: relationships and creating a culture of impact and change.

Concentrating on the dynamic of relationships must be a primary focus of the church in order to engage Millennials. As evidenced throughout this review. Millennials are highly relational and in order to reach them, relationships must be established and nurtured. Undoubtedly, focusing on personal connection will have a large impact on the traditional church service format. The autocracy of the current model—attendees come, sit, hear from a speaker and then leave—does not have to be tossed out, but it must be tweaked in order to integrate a relational aspect. For instance, instituting a debriefing and discussion time post service is one way to foster connection with Millennials. Millennials want to process as a group, and the current model of sit, hear, and leave does not allow this. According to McNeal, “The truth is that people need help debriefing their lives. They need to examine their experiences to learn from them. The goal of debriefing is to help people make sense of what is going on in them and around them.”<sup>49</sup> This perspective is highly applicable to Millennials, and McNeal furthers his challenge for relational interaction in the church by writing, “Intentional debriefing should be a part of our routine gatherings, whether in worship experiences or in small group encounters.”<sup>50</sup> Though implementing a group discussion time post-teaching presents temporal and organizational challenges, in order for the church to reach Millennials, it must institute emphasis on relational nurturing in some manner. If the church fails to, Millennials, as a highly initiating and action-oriented generation, will do it on their own, “By organizing it themselves, by forming clubs, by bearing witness collegially, by focusing on team deed-doing ahead of solitary spirituality,” and the church will have lost the opportunity to reach them.<sup>51</sup>

Another quality of Millennials that has arisen again and again throughout this research is that Millennials desire to impact communities and the world around them, and their firm belief is

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<sup>49</sup> McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 98.

<sup>50</sup> McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 102.

<sup>51</sup> Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 234.



that their personal responsibility is to do so. In order to foster interaction between Millennials and the church, this area must be addressed. Millennials are hungry to make a difference and be a part of something significant. As Howe and Strauss write, “Those who are trying to connect with Millennials would do well to focus on how they can serve others and society... Three out of four Millennials told us clearly that they desired to serve others in society.”<sup>52</sup> If congregations begin to appreciate and harness the amazing desire of Millennials to serve, it could literally begin to change the world through utilizing the largest generation that this world has ever seen to make huge impacts in society. As the Rainers write, “Millennial Christians have a burning fire within them that can revolutionize churches to make a kingdom difference. How will churches in America respond? Will they embrace the energy and zeal of Millennials, or will they disregard this generation and force these young people to venues of ministry beyond existing churches?”<sup>53</sup>

Logistically, it is not necessary for congregations to set up an extravagant system to involve Millennials in service. Cunningham states, “One way churches can harness twentysomethings’ rapid-paced energy is by calling for spontaneous involvement. For instance, rather than scheduling church ‘work days’ for some Saturday two months from now, I’ve seen huge responses with twenty somethings to last-minute announcements asking, ‘If anyone can stay after service to help out with this, we would appreciate it.’”<sup>54</sup> The goal for the church is to provide opportunities for impact and involvement; it can be long term or as simple as helping stack chairs for an hour. Millennials want to leave a mark on the world, and the church must provide venues for them to do so or they will look elsewhere to fulfill this desire.

Though there are many other avenues that could be pursued to bring Millennials back to the church, relationships and societal impact have the highest rate of return in this generation’s dividends. Rainer and Rainer write, “The best connectors in religious institutions are

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<sup>52</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>53</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

<sup>54</sup> Cunningham, *Dear Church*, 38.

relationships. The best way to get a Millennial involved in a service, activity, or ministry is through relationships.”<sup>55</sup> If the church fails to place a high emphasis on relational connection and involvement, it will have failed to engage the largest and potentially most dynamic generation the world has seen.

In conclusion, Millennials have a hunger and esteem for spiritual things; they are simply not practicing their beliefs in the same way as older generations. At this point in time, Millennials believe that the church is failing to prioritize relationships, mentoring, community and world outreach, and freedom for discussion. It is imperative to engage this generation, and in order to do so, the church must focus on nurturing relationships and providing opportunities to connect and serve the world.

### **Leadership Development of Millennials**

After obtaining a fundamental understanding of key Millennial traits and their views on spirituality and the church, we can now explore how to develop Christian leaders within their population. In order to propose a leadership development strategy for Millennials, this section will review works that delve into three topics: the characteristics of leadership development within Millennials, transformational leadership and why it is best suited to Millennials, and how the church can use this information to develop Millennials into Christian leaders. Before beginning, note that most of the literature that deals with leadership methodologies is studied and/or implemented within a secular work place. While this characteristic does not negate the applicability of these studies, the research and its results must be modified slightly to fit the context of biblical community.

Millennials are an experiential generation, and as such, any leadership development approach that involves them must focus on opportunity and empowerment. The necessity of these traits rules out use of the old top-down model of leadership with Millennials. In a top-down

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<sup>55</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

system, those at the bottom never have the opportunity to make a decision, and the new leadership trend, especially among Millennials, is that of empowerment and learning—a combination that creates a more horizontal leadership model. Bennis and Thomas write, “The old command-and-control leadership is passé’, as is the methodical decision making described by the US Army acronym OODA—observe, orient, decide, and act. Instead of commanding, today’s learners align, create and empower (ACE).”<sup>56</sup> The current literature shows a fundamental shift in how decisions are being made within organizations; people at lower ranks within corporations now have the freedom to make decisions on behalf of the company, an opportunity that did not exist for generations of workers past. Long explains this phenomenon by defining the modern leader (top-down style) and the emerging leader (horizontal), stating, “If the modern leader is represented by hierarchy and directing, the emerging leader is represented by a culture of networking, permission giving and empowerment.”<sup>57</sup> Empowerment and permission is quickly becoming the new currency in leadership development, specifically among Millennials.

The shift to empowerment as a leadership methodology also allows ample opportunity for hands-on growth, a leadership characteristic that is paramount for Millennials. Across the board, the literature affirms that Millennials desire active participation in their development—not the chance to sit in a classroom or attend a seminar. Conger and Benjamin find, “If you ask managers where they learned their leadership abilities, they will often tell you that their job experiences and bosses have contributed the most. Rarely will formal training be mentioned, despite the number of programs being designed and implemented...Job assignments, special projects, and task forces were ranked either first or second as the most effective means for

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<sup>56</sup> Warren G. Bennis and Robert J. Thomas, *Geeks and Geezers: How Era, Values, and Defining Moments Shape Leaders* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 84.

<sup>57</sup> Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2009), Kindle.

learning leadership competencies.”<sup>58</sup> The Kravis Leadership Institute echoes this trending from formal training to informal, on-the-job training and mentorship stating,

The other significant change is that development is based on action learning and not formal learning. Action learning, defined as a continuous process of learning and reflecting supported by colleagues, with a focus on getting things done, does not happen in the classroom; it occurs while working on future-oriented scenarios, on special job assignments, and on team-based training.<sup>59</sup>

For a generation that craves hands-on growth and opportunities, the shift toward an emphasis on more informal training and the opportunity for experience is empowering and exciting. Though formal learning settings have their time and place, Millennials thrive in experiential situations.

Mentoring is a final characteristic that must be present in developing Millennial leaders. Millennials are optimistic, achieving, and highly educated, and as such, they want to be appreciated for their individual gifts and strengths and desire to learn how they can be used to impact those around them. They do not want to be treated as a product that can be mass produced; thus, tailored mentoring is an imperative leadership methodology for them. The tailored approach to leadership development is already being employed successfully in many organizations. For instance, *Improving Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations* acknowledges the shift in models, saying, “This new paradigm for leadership development requires a shift from one-size-fits-all training program to a program that is custom-designed—one that takes advantage of the varied learning opportunities within the nonprofit organization.”<sup>60</sup> Only by having someone who knows an individual’s strengths, weaknesses, and abilities can a custom leadership program be implemented, and the source of this personal knowledge comes from a mentor relationship. Through mentoring, older individuals can come alongside Millennials and help shape them into future leaders by asking personalized questions and providing specific

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<sup>58</sup> Jay A. Conger and Beth Benjamin, *Building Leaders: How Successful Companies Develop the Next Generation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 9.

<sup>59</sup> Kravis Leadership Institute, *Improving Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 254.

<sup>60</sup> Kravis Leadership Institute, *Improving Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations*, 254.

opportunities to aid in their development. According to John Maxwell, “In order to create the right opportunities, we must look at the potential leaders around us and ask, ‘What does this person need in order to grow?’ A generic formula will not work. If we don’t fit the opportunity to the potential leader, we may find ourselves in the position of offering things that our people don’t need.”<sup>61</sup> Maxwell continues, saying, “People cannot be nurtured from a distance or by infrequent, short spurts of attention. They need you to spend time with them—planned time, not just a few words on a way to a meeting.”<sup>62</sup> To develop Millennial leaders, mentorship must be employed as a leadership methodology.

Millennials do not flourish under leadership development practices that are top-down, formal, and one-size-fits-all. Research affirms that to reach Millennials, dramatic changes must take place to the current system. The leadership methodology that is used to train and raise up Millennial leaders must be horizontal, hands-on, and mentor-focused.

Based on what current literature deems as the specific needs and desires of Millennials, transformational leadership methodologies and practices seem to best fit this generation. But before unpacking why this type of leadership works best with Millennials, it is important to understand the basis of transformational leadership and its practices. After exploring its origins, one can then understand why transformational leadership works well with Millennials by meeting their three basic leadership needs for empowerment, hands-on leadership development, and mentoring opportunities.

Just as each generation shapes and shifts the culture it interacts with; each new generation also impacts leadership theory and methods. Across the globe, common themes in leadership cultures are interacting with Millennials. Specifically, they are shifting away from transactional leadership to a transformational methodology. The best way to understand the difference

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<sup>61</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You: How to Help Others Reach Their Full Potential* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 25.

<sup>62</sup> Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 69.

between these two methodologies is to see them pitted against one another. According to Northouse, “Transactional leadership refers to the bulk of leadership models, which focus on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. Politicians who win votes by promising ‘no new taxes’ are demonstrating transactional leadership.”<sup>63</sup> The author then explains that transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential.<sup>64</sup> Clearly, there are major differences between these two models—one is a one-size-fits-all approach, while the other is tailored and specific to the needs of individual followers. With this contrast in mind, it is not difficult to understand why Millennials thrive in situations where transformational leadership is employed.

Transformational leadership practices provide ample room for opportunity and empowerment, two qualities that are musts for the growth of Millennials. The empowerment employed by the transformational model utilizes team empowerment to meet two critical Millennial needs: opportunity and community. Bass and Riggio write,

Increasingly, leaders are being encouraged to empower their followers by developing them into high-involvement teams focused on quality and cost-effectiveness as well as quantity of output production and service...More responsibility is moved downward in the flattening organizational hierarchy increasingly composed of educated professionals who see themselves as colleagues rather than in strict superior-subordinate relationships.<sup>65</sup>

Northouse expands on this characteristic of transformational methodology: “Transformational leadership’s popularity might be due to its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and follower development, which fits the needs of today’s work groups, who want to be inspired

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<sup>63</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2013), Kindle.

<sup>64</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*.

<sup>65</sup> Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed. (Mahwah: Psychology Press, 2006), 163.

and empowered to succeed in times of uncertainty.”<sup>66</sup> Because this leadership model creates horizontal structures and provides chances for growth and community, transformational methodology fits Millennials well.

At its core, “Transformational leadership is concerned with improving the performance of followers and developing followers to their fullest potential.”<sup>67</sup> Therefore, it is logical that transformational methodology would mandate hands-on and experiential learning for Millennials because they demand these qualities in order to thrive. Classroom settings are subpar when it comes to engaging and growing Millennial leaders; they want to be in the middle of the action and learn from experience. As Conger and Benjamin explain, “Today, more and more leadership development takes place in action learning formats where company-based projects serve as the principle learning vehicle. The projects themselves center around important challenges facing the organization and so ensure the learning experience serves both the individual and the company.”<sup>68</sup> Transformational leadership employs this type of development because it invests in working as a team toward something larger than oneself. Riggio and Orr write,

Transformational leaders are leaders who develop positive, rich, emotional relationships with followers that build commitment to a common purpose or cause and contribute to their development as individuals and as future leaders. Typically, this common cause contributes to the “greater good,” so there is an obvious “moral” overtone to transformational leadership.<sup>69</sup>

This methodology meets the high need for hands-on experience and development desired by Millennials.

Millennial’s desire for mentoring is also met via transformational leadership practices, for when it comes to this type of leadership, mentorship is at the core of its methodology. According to Burns,

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<sup>66</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*.

<sup>67</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*.

<sup>68</sup> Jay A. Conger and Beth Benjamin, *Building Leaders: How Successful Companies Develop the Next Generation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 211.

<sup>69</sup> Kravis Leadership Institute, *Improving Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations*, 254.

The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But, beyond that, the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents.<sup>70</sup>

Transformational leadership is personal and involved; those utilizing it know their followers well and pour into their growth—an action known as mentoring. The end goal of this leadership method is not getting things done but, instead, developing people. However, growing people and accomplishing organizational goals do not have to be mutually exclusive if strategy is employed in their implementation. Maxwell writes that to execute both simultaneously and,

To ensure success, identify the potential in each future leader and cultivate it in light of the needs of the organization. It produces a win-win situation. The mentoring leader wins because of the rising star working beneath him or her who can perform and produce. The organization wins because its mission is being fulfilled. The potential leader wins because he is being developed and improved.<sup>71</sup>

Mentorship not only benefits those in the actual mentoring relationship but benefits the institutions in which it takes place. Transformational methodology insists on practicing individual mentoring while achieving high goals, thereby making it an ideal model to utilize with Millennials.

Transformational leadership methodology fits well within the parameters and demands of Millennials. This leadership method emphasizes empowerment, hands-on opportunities, and mentoring, three key desires of Millennials. Transformational leadership should be employed by those seeking to develop Millennial leaders.

So, how do the desires of Millennials and transformational leadership methodology affect the church's interaction with this generation? As evidenced above, the key cry of Millennials is opportunity—for growth, experiential development, and mentorship. However, according to current literature, many congregations are failing to provide opportunities for this up-and-coming generation.

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<sup>70</sup> James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (Englewood Cliffs: Harper Perennial, 1982), Kindle.

<sup>71</sup> Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 21.



Transformational leadership strives to develop leaders within the context of opportunity; as evidenced above, this style of leadership fits the needs of Millennials well. In spite of this reality, it appears that the church is not leading its Millennials in this way. Long writes,

Many emerging leaders feel stifled because they come into leadership roles in existing churches, where all the questions of how to organize and how to lead were answered long ago. They do not feel that there is any room or openness for new ways of leading. This is why they are leaving the existing churches or businesses to start their own church or business.<sup>72</sup>

If the church intends to develop Millennial leaders, congregations must provide opportunities for growth, experience, and mentorship. Doing so will require a shift from the prevalent top-down structure to a more horizontal one, for, “If the modern leader is represented by hierarchy and directing, the emerging leader is represented by a ‘culture of networking, permission giving and empowerment.’”<sup>73</sup> According to Mallory, “You will not have a local church based on the biblical model without some kind of team mind-set. The word “equipping” immediately assumes a team model—those who do the equipping and those who are being equipped. One group needs the other. They form a team.”<sup>74</sup> Mallory’s description of a biblical model echoes the structure of the transformational model, both are team-centric and focused on mentoring—two qualities that align well with Millennial desires. As of right now, the majority of congregations are not employing a leadership methodology that engages Millennials and asks it to perform at its highest potential; however, if transformational leadership becomes the church norm for interacting with this generation, unforeseen growth and impact will occur.

Millennials thrives on opportunity—specifically the opportunity for empowerment, hands-on growth and challenges, and mentoring relationships. These three core leadership characteristics are found within the practice of transformational leadership methodology. Currently, the church at large is not reaching out to Millennials in this fashion, and its current

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<sup>72</sup> Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump: Building Partnerships between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2009), Kindle.

<sup>73</sup> Long, *The Leadership Jump*.

<sup>74</sup> Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), Kindle.

leadership structure is actually hindering the development of Millennial leaders. If it can shift toward a more opportunistic and biblical type of leadership, the church will have an enormous influx of impact and outreach for,

Nearly eight out of ten [Millennials] already have a strong motivation to serve others in society. And unlike the Baby Boomers, who were activists in their own ways, Millennials are motivated more by helping others than seeking their own preferences. That is why if you see a church with a large number of Millennials, you are likely to see a church that is passionate about serving its community and passionate about reaching the nations with the gospel.<sup>75</sup>

### **Mentoring of Millennials**

As seen in the above section, Millennials thrive on hands on experience, growth, and opportunity; therefore the transformational leadership methodology is an obvious fit to reach them. But why an emphasis on mentorship? The literature reviewed in this section focused specifically on mentoring as a primary means of developing Millennial leaders by examining the transition of Millennials from traditional learning institutions to the workforce and the obstacles encountered by both parties involved with the change. Support for the mentorship model is based on literature that follows the Millennials' transition from the classroom to the workplace.

First, the research examined the shift of Millennials from institutions of higher learning to the workplace. There are two major hurdles that Millennials are encountering when leaving school and entering the mainstream workplace. The first involves technology and its integration, or lack thereof, into the workplace. Millennials are no strangers to technology. However, upon entering the workforce, they have stepped out of an educational system which catered to their technological learning styles and into a workplace where multiple generations exist and certain technological familiarities they are used to are no longer in place. The slower rate in which technology has been adopted in the general workplace may come as a culture shock to Millennials. This technological gap is exacerbated by the reality that for the first time,

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<sup>75</sup> Rainer and Rainer, *Millennials*.

Millennials are now working alongside multiple generations in their jobs. Martin writes, “What makes Millennials different from Gen Xers and Boomers? It’s the internet. The internet is the lowest common denominator among a myriad of differences between Millennials and the generations of Americans that come before them.”<sup>76</sup> Millennials do not know how to navigate this new environment and in order to see the way, they need someone who has gone before them to come alongside and guide them.

Not only is the technological transition difficult, Millennials must also adapt their overarching learning style brought from the traditional education system to a new learning style employed by most workplaces. A Millennial’s transition to the workforce shifts them from the question-answer style of learning used in school to the problem-solving style of learning used in a work environment. For example, in most situations in the workplace, there is not a video to watch or book to read for the answer needed to a problem. Instead they must integrate their knowledge and understanding of situations with circumstances to make an informed decision. Campbell explains this well writing, “There isn’t a curriculum per se. There isn’t a video with discussion questions. There isn’t a form you fill out at the end saying, “Joe Smith has completed blankety-blank course.”<sup>77</sup> The difficulty transitioning from institutions of learning to a vocation is not limited to the secular setting. Williams addresses the issue of pastors not being fully prepared when they transition from the academic to the vocation of pastoring in writing, “The transition from the seminar room to the elder’s meeting, from the library to the pulpit, or from debating theories of epistemology to speaking salutary words of grace is difficult.”<sup>78</sup> Williams highlights that this issue of learning is not limited to secular institutions but also effects seminary and religious institutions. He goes on to say, speaking of seminarians, “For several years we have

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<sup>76</sup> Martin, *Ministering to Millennials*, Kindle.

<sup>77</sup> Regi Campbell, *Mentor Like Jesus: His Radical Approach to Building the Church* (Atlanta: RM Press, 2016), Kindle.

<sup>78</sup> Brian A. Williams, *The Potter’s Rib: Mentoring for Pastoral Formation* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005), 56.

trained our minds to think in a particular way. The knowledge and skills learned in seminary are fundamental. However, we have to learn how to shape and use that knowledge and those skills in new ways with each person we counsel or pray with or teach.”<sup>79</sup> Williams emphasizes the gap between the learning in school and application in a job. This gap—shifting from traditional education to a vocation and the changes that it requires in learning and problem-solving styles—is another area in which a mentor can come alongside and help Millennials transition well into unfamiliar territory.

After highlighting the hurdles that Millennials encounter when moving from traditional education to the workforce, the research will now look at a change that the workplace is experiencing when interacting with the Millennials entering its doors. Unlike previous generations that only involved upper tier positions in the decision-making process, Millennials desire to be in the middle of projects, jobs and processes- not on the outside looking in and awaiting their turn. This has caused organizations to restructure their leadership philosophy. Robinson states that now, “Leaders of great corporations identify and train young prodigies with the understanding and hope that their mentees will become the kinds of leaders who take the corporation to the next level. Through teaching, training, modeling, correction, and positive reinforcement, good mentors help their mentees understand their work, make wise decisions, set goals, build teams, and plan strategically. In this way, mentoring develops talent and increases performance so the mentor, mentees, and organizations in which they work and serve are all beneficiaries.”<sup>80</sup> Robinson highlights two essential facts: that Millennials desire to be in the middle of it all and that mentoring engages them in the present and leverages them, their education, and their optimism in the future. The same logic can also be applied to the integration of Millennials into congregational leadership opportunities. In the secular workplace, Millennials want to be a part of the process, and the same is true within the congregational community they

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<sup>79</sup> Williams, *The Potter's Rib*, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Natasha S. Robinson, *Mentor for Life: Finding Purpose through Intentional Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle.

attend. As Robinson writes above, involving Millennials in leadership and decision-making conversations allows them to understand their local congregation and to be trained up to lead it in the future. Allowing Millennials to come alongside leaders and to learn from them in a mentor/mentee relationship can strengthen both secular and sacred organizations.

The literature reviewed in this section highlights some of the difficulties that Millennials have with leaving their academic setting and entering the workforce as well as the way the workforce is impacted by Millennials. Integrating Millennials takes time and effort, but mentoring is a natural bridge for the transition. As Millennials leave technologically advanced learning institutions and step into the workforce, they struggle because they have grown accustomed to the information that they need being readily available or easily accessed through a book or professor, and the workplace is often not as technological or as simple. Thus, Millennials gravitate to the idea of mentoring, simply because those that have come before them have the information that they need to succeed and can provide insight about their new environment. A mentor allows Millennials to see behind the curtain, understand the culture, and be trained to lead in the future; it allows Millennials to succeed and an organization to invest in its future leaders.

### **My Thesis Project in Context of Literature Reviewed**

Each section discussed with regards to Millennials in this chapter: from defining who they are, to their current relationship and views of the church, to their current desire for leadership development and what this would look like for them within the context of the local church have influenced the need for my thesis-project. As this chapter concludes, it is critical to next take a look at what mentoring and discipleship looks like throughout the Old and New Testament scriptures to ensure that, while current literature affirms Millennials are moving away from the church and have a strong desire for mentoring, does mentoring within the context of Scripture actually encourage intergenerational mentoring? If Scripture indeed indicates this, the next logical step would be to begin to assess whether or not intergenerational mentoring within

the local church encourages Millennials to continue to grow in their relationships with Christ while also assuming leadership roles within the local church at the same time.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Now we have some understanding of the Millennial generation—its characteristics and demographics, how Millennials themselves relate to the church, and how to best encourage growth and development within this particular generation. From here, we will look at the idea of developing Millennials for leadership within the congregational context. How can congregations begin to reach and develop a people who feel ambivalent—at best—about the church? And from there, how can they begin to form the next generation of church leaders from within this disengaged group? Answers to these questions can be found in one of the most basic tenants of Christianity, an idea that is clearly seen in the life of Christ. Based on the research about Millennials, the most prominent and promising method of developing them as leaders comes from the practice of discipleship, a concept known in the secular world as mentoring. This chapter will examine the idea of leadership development in Millennials through the means of mentoring, a lay term for what Scripture refers to as discipleship in both the Old and New Testaments. First, we will describe mentoring and establish the scriptural basis for its use as a means of leadership development. Once we have a foundation, we will delve into the biblical characteristics of mentoring by looking at Christ’s relationships with His disciples. From there, we will appraise how both the disciples and the early church carried on the legacy of Christ-like mentoring.

#### **What is Mentoring?**

One could easily assume that based on the sheer number of books published in the last ten years that expound upon the topics of mentoring and leadership coaching, that the idea is relatively new in leadership development. However, the first occurrence of the word “mentor” can be traced back to the eighth century BC; Homer uses Mentor as the proper name of the character who trains up the son of King Odysseus. What is fascinating about Homer’s character, Mentor, is not simply the name itself, but that Mentor’s role gives some core characteristics of

what makes up a mentor.<sup>1</sup> Since its introduction in *The Odyssey*,<sup>2</sup> the core definition of mentor has remained steadfast.

In some ways, mentoring is as old as civilization itself. For instance, during ancient times, a trade, a job, or a craft was learned from someone older and more established than oneself. Ron Davis notes that,

Mentoring is not a new idea. In fact, mentoring used to be the *only* means of transmitting values, skills, and character qualities from one generation to the next. In the past centuries, craftsmen of every calling—from carpenters to metal-smiths to lawyers to the great painters and composers of the Renaissance—employed young apprentices. These apprentices learned not only the skills and craft of their trade, but such intangible dimensions of their calling as pride of craftsmanship, integrity, honesty, diligence, and commitment to excellence.<sup>3</sup>

As Davis asserts, the practice of mentorship has always been an integral part of society—regardless of whether the word mentor has been formally defined or not.

Though the core principles behind the concept of mentoring have remained the same over centuries, the methodologies of those who practice mentorship have morphed over time. The practice of developing leaders through intentional mentoring relationships has been adopted by business communities and educational centers as well as among Christians. Because each organization describes their program differently, mentorship is known by many different names. In business and higher education, the word “mentor” is still used. Blue-collar trades employ the word “apprenticeship” to describe their actions, and “discipleship” is the word that is used within evangelical circles. However, at the heart of each mentoring program, the foundational tenants remain the same—the passing on of wisdom, knowledge, and skills executed within the context of a relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Davis suggested that the character Mentor utilized components of wisdom, caring, and commitment to train up the next generation. Ron Lee Davis with James D. Denney, *Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, and Robert Fitzgerald, *The Odyssey* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 199.

<sup>3</sup> Ron Lee Davis with James D. Denney, *Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 19.



The relational aspect of mentorship is essential; any type of mentoring—from apprenticeship to discipleship—is wrapped up in the sharing of knowledge and experience within a relationship. The mentor gives specific attention to the source of knowledge, the mentor himself, in order to glean wisdom and expertise. It is important to grasp this critical attribute of mentorship, because without it, we cannot make a biblical case for mentoring. A word study of mentor would return with zero references from either the Old or New Testaments. However, when the essential characteristics of mentoring are studied—words such as imitate, model, follow—a plethora of information is found. The same pattern rings true with the word disciple: “Outside the four Gospels, the Acts, and the one or two instances in the Apocalypse . . . ‘Disciple’ and ‘follower’ are conspicuously absent in the rest of the New Testament.”<sup>4</sup> Again, this does not mean that discipleship is absent in the rest of the New Testament. The foundational components of mentoring are employed when believers are called “to be ‘imitators’ (*mimetes*, or with the verb *mimeomai*) and/or to reflect in their lives the ‘example’ or ‘pattern’ (*typos*, *hypotyposis*) of the apostle Paul, of Jesus Christ, or even of God himself.”<sup>5</sup> Although the actual words “mentor” or “disciple” are uncommon throughout the canon of Scripture, the acts of mentoring and discipleship are practiced consistently; the language that is used to describe the process simply differs. The fundamental tenants of mentorship are woven throughout the Bible.

The practice of mentoring is at the core of God’s plan for salvation as well as the growth of his church and its leaders. To understand this statement, we will examine the truth that God is the original Source, the first mentor, and then trace how his example of mentorship has been passed on to others throughout Scripture. We will begin by unpacking Old Testament examples of mentoring and then move on to investigate the New Testament and its examples of discipleship. Once the biblical history of mentorship has been established, we examine scriptural examples of mentoring—placing most of our emphasis on Christ and his relationships with the

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<sup>4</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Longenecker, *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, 5.

disciples—in order to build a foundation for the development of mentoring programs in today’s western churches.

### **The Biblical Basis for Mentorship**

Before delving into biblical examples of mentorship, it is imperative to understand that the idea of mentoring is entrenched deeply in both the cultural context and the language of Scripture. Joel Comiskey writes, “The word ‘disciple’ simply means ‘pupil’ or ‘learner.’ In ancient times, a teacher’s students or followers were called disciples. In the Greek world, philosophers were surrounded by their pupils. The Jews claimed to be disciples of Moses (John 9:28) and the followers of John the Baptist were known as his disciples (Mark 2:18; John 1:35.) Jesus also had a group of disciples (Matthew 5:1; Luke 6:17; 19:37.)”<sup>6</sup> Once again, although the specific terminology is not the word “mentor,” the discipleship relationship holds the similar function as a mentor—the impartation of knowledge from one person to another.

According to Dallas Willard, “The word ‘disciple’ occurs 269 times in the New Testament. ‘Christian’ is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus—in a situation where it was no longer possible to regard them as a sect of Jews (Acts 11:26.)”<sup>7</sup> Here, Willard denotes that the primary biblical word that defines a mentoring relationship with Jesus is the word “disciple.” However, although the word “disciple” is strictly a New Testament word, the concept is no different than the one found in the Old Testament. The focus of the learning in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is God Himself. In the Old Testament it was God the Father, and in the New Testament it is God the Son. Oswald Sanders writes, “A disciple is simply ‘a learner.’ The word comes from a root that means ‘thought accompanied by endeavor.’ So, a disciple of Christ can be defined as ‘a learner of Jesus

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<sup>6</sup> Joel Comiskey, *The Relational Disciple: How God Uses Community to Shape Followers of Jesus* (Moreno Valley: CCS Publishing, 2009), Kindle.

<sup>7</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings On Discipleship*, Reprint ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2014), Kindle.

who accepts the teaching of his Master, not only in belief but in lifestyle.’ It involves acceptance of the views and practices of the Teacher and obedience to His commands.”<sup>8</sup> With this description in mind, it is easy to find instances of discipleship, or mentorship, in both the Old and New Testaments.

By understanding the similarities in the purposes of mentorship and discipleship, the sharing of knowledge and skills, it makes perfect sense as to why evangelicals have picked up on our cultural language—mentoring—as a common way to understand the development of people into followers of Jesus. The term is different, but the concept is still much the same. However, on another level, it is critical to recognize that the ideas of mentorship in the secular world and mentorship within Christianity are different. Their core is the same, the sharing of knowledge or skills with another, but the foundation upon which they are built vary greatly. As mentioned earlier, secular mentorship, like its biblical counterpart, consists of a leader imparting information to another; however, in a secular atmosphere, the information valued and shared changes from leader to leader. Within the Christian context, this variance does not exist. Christian mentoring relationships all have the same focus—becoming more like God. God himself is unchanging and immutable; therefore, the ideas, knowledge, and skills shared may vary in their expression but not their purpose. The following sections explain that in both the Old and New Testaments, God Himself initiates the original mentoring relationship and that His model is then passed down to each new mentor and disciple relationship that follows.

### **Mentoring Relationships in the Old Testament**

It would be easy to start in the New Testament for the establishment of the mentoring dynamic between humans and God as the New Testament clears the way with this kind of relationship between Jesus and the disciples. However, the calling motif is first introduced in the Old Testament and cannot be overlooked as we seek to see the congruence between the Old and

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<sup>8</sup>Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship*, 25.

New Testaments. This is seen with the first relationship we will look at in the Old Testament when God calls Abraham. This calling motif was noted by Wilkins, “Jesus’ call in the first century was a reiteration and extension of the call God had proffered to the people of Israel centuries before. When God directed Abraham “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you” (Gen 12:1), a calling motif was established among the covenantal people of Israel which later reverberated in Jesus’ challenge.”<sup>9</sup> Wilkins is simply bringing up the reality that this personal, learning relationship was established long before Christ walked on the earth and we will see this by looking at several relationships in which God did this in the Old Testament.

### God as Mentor in the Old Testament

We will begin by looking at the call made to Abraham by God. Each of the mentoring relationships initiated by God start with a call to leave your current state and follow. For example, one of the earliest instances of this occurs in Genesis 12 when God calls Abram to leave his family and follow Him. The Lord says to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you” (Gen 12:1.)<sup>10</sup> The mentoring relationship is initiated by God through a call to follow in obedience through an act of faith. Mathews writes, “Abram is called upon to leave both his past and his future in placing his trust in God.”<sup>11</sup> Without the act of obedience to the call, no mentorship relationship can take place. This can be seen in the continued working out of this relationship between God and the disciple is established and the intent of the relationship is clarified. God states His purpose for Abram, and their relationship is described in the next few verses, saying, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Gen 12:2.)

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<sup>9</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 52-53.

<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the New International Version of the Bible is used in this dissertation. *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), 1984.

<sup>11</sup> K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, vol. 1B of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 105.

Though it is easy to assume that these words are simple promises made to Abram, it is important to understand that they are instead the birth of a mentoring relationship, one in which a commitment is made by the mentee to the mentor. It is in this way we see the promises that God gives to Abram are simply dependent upon his response, as Mathews writes, “No obligations are placed upon Abram to maintain the promises (as for Israel at Sinai); he must only respond to the Lord’s command to “leave,” an act of loyalty.”<sup>12</sup> The beginning of a mentor relationship is always one of trust between the mentee and the mentor. Apart from God calling Abram to follow and Abram trusting can Abram move into what God has for him. Abram cannot be transformed into the person that God needs him to become in order to carry out these promises.

The transformative nature of this mentoring relationship is seen in Genesis 17 when God changes Abram’s name to Abraham—an act that symbolizes Abraham is no longer who he used to be, a man without relationship to God, but instead is now a disciple radically changed by his mentorship with God. (Gen. 17:1-8) Ross states, “The patriarch’s name change was crucial. The name Abram (17:5), meaning “exalted father,” harked *back* to Terah (11:27) and implied that Abram came from royal lineage. But in Hebrew the name Abraham (*’abrāhām*) sounds similar to “father of a multitude” (*’ab hāmôn*) of nations (17:4–5.) His new name implied a look *ahead* to his descendants.<sup>13</sup> Ross’s point being that Abram’s name change was one to act as a reminder of his now formed relationship with God. A relationship born out of God’s call to Abram to follow and Abram’s response to follow in trust. This mentoring relationship is highlighted when Ross concludes by writing this about the name change, “His new name and his wife’s new name were perpetual reminders of God’s sure word. Every time someone addressed him, he would recall God’s promise, until finally Isaac, the child of promise, would call him “abba” (father).<sup>14</sup>

God’s relationship with Abraham resembles the mentorship He also had with Moses. Once again, God’s initiation of the mentoring process with Moses begins with a call to follow—

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<sup>12</sup> Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 106.

<sup>13</sup> Allen P. Ross, “Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 58.

<sup>14</sup> Ross, “Genesis,” 58.

just as a teacher calls to a disciple. In Exodus 3, God commences their relationship by calling Moses to follow Him; from within a burning bush, He says, “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10.) And like with Abraham, God then defines their relationship and its purposes; it will be one of learning, instruction and transformation. God tells Moses, “I will be with you. And this will be a sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” (Exod 3:12.) The call that God places on people is not only to Him, but ultimately to His mission, and to accomplish that end, He must transform those He calls through an active relationship with Him. The tension found in the response of Moses to God’s call to follow into this deeper trusting relationship. However, God’s call is none-the-less one of transformation of people for his mission and their good. The reality of this is expounded upon by Stuart, “For God to ‘be with’ someone means that he provides that person direct, special help and guidance that, in turn, can cause people to recognize that person’s worth and/or authority in given situations.”<sup>15</sup> The idea is that God is with Moses. This is a primary mark of a mentoring relationship. The mentor is going with the mentee in the doing. This is seemingly what God is doing here with Moses.

Obviously, Abraham and Moses are not the only people that God called into a mentoring relationship in the Old Testament. Delving further into its history, more examples of God specifically calling people to mentorship with Him arise, examples such as Samuel (1 Sam 3:1-21) and David (1 Sam 16:7-13), along with many others. However, this specific type of mentorship, God choosing and then calling a person into a discipleship relationship with Himself, is just one of the forms of mentoring found in the Old Testament. The second type of mentoring relationship instituted in the Old Testament is between a believer, or follower of God, and the mentored, someone whom the mentor is instructing in the same ways God has personally

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2 of The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 118.

instructed him. The heart of this type of mentorship is the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, and there are many examples of it found within the Old Testament.

### People as Mentors in the Old Testament

As the Old Testament continues to unfold, you continue to see God using specific purposes but as the nation of Israel begins to become a focal point you also begin to see God begin to use the people in which he has mentored into relationships with mentees. There are many different relationships one could study in a greater depth, but some make the case for several being the most prominent of these types of relationships. Hengel, writes, “Several relationships between individuals in the Old Testament could be called “discipleship” relationships. Most prominent among them are the relationships between Moses and Joshua, between Elijah and Elisha, and between Jeremiah and Baruch.”<sup>16</sup> The first relationship we will look at is one which Hengel notes, the relationship between Moses and Joshua.

As noted earlier in Moses’ interaction with God where we used their relationship to define a mentoring relationship between God and a disciple. It is paramount to see the instruction God gave to Moses did not end with Moses,’ however, Moses took his learning and passed it on to his own disciple, Joshua. While Joshua’s primary place in which he would have received theological education would have been in the home and before his relationship with Moses, however, the working out of this theological foundation would take place alongside of Moses as he is shaped to be the next leader of the people of Israel. In Numbers, the writer states that Joshua was under Moses’ care from his youth, and this information illustrates the teacher-student aspect contained in discipleship where Joshua would have learned various legislative and judicial functions in which Moses carried out (Num 11:28.). Like the call that God placed on Moses himself, Moses places a similar call to lead the nation of Israel on Joshua (Deut 31:7), an act that demonstrates the passing on of information and knowledge that takes place in mentorship. Even

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<sup>16</sup> Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, trans. J. Greig, 1968 (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 17-18.

though Moses personally trains and chooses Joshua to lead God's people, the focus of their relationship is still God Himself and becoming more like him. Moses did not raise up or disciple Joshua to be a little Moses but ultimately a follower of God, Wilkins makes this argument by stating, "Both master and disciple were chosen by God to carry out his work. The disciple was in training to carry out the master's work once the master passed from the scene. Joshua succeeded Moses in his work of serving God in retaking the promise land."<sup>17</sup> The very nature of this transmission of knowledge and purpose is seen clearly in Deuteronomy when Moses instructs Joshua that, "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Deut 31:8.) The very message that Moses gives to Joshua is the same message in which the Lord gave to Moses. This highlights how the mentoring relationship between Moses and Joshua is a perfect example of biblical mentorship as Williams notes similarly, "It is clear that Joshua's preparation for leadership did not occur only at that moment of the Spirit's quickening, but was the result of years of close personal companionship with the exercise of leadership under Moses."<sup>18</sup>

While the mentoring relationship that is between a human teacher and their disciple is easily seen between Moses and Joshua, their relationship is not the sole representation of discipleship in the Old Testament. Another example of this type of mentorship is found in Elijah and Elisha; in their relationship, one prophet passes on His knowledge of the Lord and His mission to the next. The Prophet Isaiah is yet another example of a mentor. In Isaiah 16, he writes, "Tie up the scroll as legal evidence, seal the official record of God's instructions and give it to my followers" (Isa 8:16.) Though it is not explicitly stated, it is easily inferred from the word "followers" that Isaiah built up and instructed others in the ways of the Lord. This idea of Isaiah training his disciples in the law is noted by Radmacher, Allen and House, "Law refers to

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<sup>17</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. 62.

<sup>18</sup> Williams, *The Potter's Rib: Mentoring for Pastoral Formation*, 182-183.



God's instruction revealed through Isaiah. Isaiah's disciples put his prophecies in the form of a legal transaction probably to prove their authenticity when they were fulfilled."<sup>19</sup> Again, there is an ongoing training in which each of the human examples in which mentoring took place was a place in which the purposes of God played out practically in everyday life in the leading of God's people. Lastly, while the mentoring relationships above take place within the constructs of offices or roles the Lord called people to or established, it should not be assumed that biblical mentorship is limited to such terms. The same type of mentoring in which life instruction can be seen in the relationship of Ruth and Naomi, as well as, examples of father/son mentorship found in the wisdom literature are other forms and examples of mentorship found within the Old Testament (Ruth 1-4.)

Support for the practice of mentorship abounds in the Old Testament. The types of discipleship found there differ greatly in form; mentorship is found in Abraham and Moses' call from God Himself, to the passing on of knowledge from leader to leader, to the personal relationships between parents and their children. Though the examples of it vary in their execution and type, each discipleship relationship existed to further others' pursuit of and growth toward God Himself. Mentoring relationships are the primary means utilized in the Old Testament for passing on the understanding, knowledge, and gifts of what it is to walk in relationship with God.

### **Mentoring Relationships in the New Testament**

When transitioning from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the relationship of God, through the person of Jesus Christ, and His mentoring relationship with His followers is the focus of this research project, as well as looking at several cases in which mentorship took place between followers of Jesus and other, younger converts. Like God the Father in the Old

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<sup>19</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999), 817.

Testament, Christ begins His mentoring relationships with a call to follow. Similarly, true with how God developed mentoring relationships in the Old Testament, so Christ will use people as the means in which he will develop mentors who would continue the process of raising up Christ followers long after he is gone. This will be studied more in depth in the following sections.

### Jesus as Mentor in the New Testament

This unmistakable call to be a follower, learner, and disciple cannot be more clearly seen than in the Gospel of Mark when he writes, “Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:13-15.) Like God the Father, from the beginning, Jesus clarifies the mentoring relationship and His intent. The purpose of the twelve’s relationship with him was to learn, grow, and be transformed into a follower of Christ. This relational reality is supported by Edwards, “From the beginning of his Galilean ministry Jesus calls people to fellowship with himself in order to implant his message and mission among them. The word for “disciple,” in both its Greek and Hebrew roots, means “student” or “learner,” specifically one who learns in active fellowship, hence an apprentice.”<sup>20</sup> In the end, the purpose that Jesus would continually be championing was the transformational nature from a student and a learner to a doer, and this reality is at the heart of mentoring and the Gospels show us how he does it.

The Gospels of the New Testament show how the methodologies of Christ’s discipleship play out over the course of three years. His teachings, investments, and encouragements are recorded. Christ teaches the disciples about the supremacy of faith (Luke 7:9), consistently puts them in positions to depend on Him (Mark 4:35-40; Matt 14:13-21), instructs and models for them, and then sends them out to do the same (Matt 10.) The disciples were able to learn from Him in real life about practical matters of faith; this is the core of Christ’s mentoring relationship

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<sup>20</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 110.

with them. It was not a podcast, a lecture, a book, or a one-time sit down for coffee. The mentorship that Jesus modeled are relationships that require time, commitment, and investment into others.

In many ways, this is one major obstacle inhibiting mentoring relationships today, the reality that relationships require time and effort. Yet, this is how we see Jesus do it, and he is our primary example and model. He lived with the disciples for three years teaching, correcting, and walking alongside of them in the various processes of life such as meals and relationships. He varied his teaching to help his mentees understand from using parables which contained object lessons about real life to a simple format of how to pray. He walked them through doctrinal issues (e.g., the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:23-26.) These elements took time and were not a program or a class that could be done in a set number of weeks. This reality is recognized by Comiskey, “Christ knew that theoretical information separated from practical experience would have little lasting value. After the disciples finished their ministry tour, they met with Jesus to discuss what happened. The apostles gathered around Him and reported all they had done and taught (Mark 6:30.)”<sup>21</sup> When examining Jesus’ relationship with his disciples, it is evident that biblical mentorship is much more than a simple academic or trade teaching relationship. The mentoring relationship that Jesus demonstrates is one of life investment by the mentor and life change by the mentored. Williams says it best, “He drew to him a small cluster of rather motley and indistinguishable individuals and taught them in close proximity. Though the direct experience of seeing Christ at work through words and actions, the disciples were being prepared for ministry that they would have once their teacher had departed.”<sup>22</sup> Jesus utilized the time spent in close proximity during his short time with them to shape them for the time when he was no longer beside them.

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<sup>21</sup> Comiskey, *The Relational Disciple*.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, *The Potter’s Rib*, 182-183.

### People as Mentors in the New Testament

As with the Old Testament, the purpose of New Testament discipleship is not only individual transformation but replication and sharing of the information received. God's initiation of a relationship with Abraham led to the birth of a chosen people learning to walk in a way that set them apart and exhibited the power of the one, true God. In the same way, Jesus mentored the disciples so that they would carry his message to others. In Matthew 28, Christ commands his disciples to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:19-20.) Once again, God calls people both to Himself and to His mission.

Just as the Old Testament has examples of both God to person and person to person mentoring relationships, the New Testament supports both types of mentorship as well. As seen above, person to person discipleship is actually commanded by Christ. The New Testament is full of examples of teacher and learner discipleship (i.e. the book of Acts and the epistles), but one clear example of the onward replication of discipleship is seen in the New Testament through Barnabas and Paul's relationship. The book of Acts shows the transition from a learner to mentor as it gives the reader a window into the relationship between Barnabas, the mentor and Paul, his mentee. The relationship between these two plays out when Barnabas first comes to Paul in Acts 11, and then you begin to see the missionary journeys begin to take place in which Barnabas and Paul begin to walk in life alongside of each other. This is a mentoring relationship, a mentor, Barnabas, walking alongside Paul, the mentee, in real life ministry circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

The forward motion of the Great Commission is lived out through Barnabas and Paul, but it does not stop there. In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1.) Paul has moved from being a mentee to a mentor where he is now taking others alongside of him. We see this in Paul's mentorship of Timothy, which mirrors

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<sup>23</sup> Davis with Denney, *Mentoring*, 44.

that of Paul's discipleship by Barnabas. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:1-2.) Just as Paul transitioned from being led to leading, he is now challenging Timothy to do the same. The goal of biblical mentoring relationships is replication of people who will know Him and seek to look like God Himself. Likewise, we later see this same model Paul does with Timothy in Paul's relationship with Titus where he offers words of experience and counsel to an upcoming pastor.

Though this overview of mentorship in the Old and New Testaments is short, it is blatantly apparent that mentoring relationships are at the core of biblical leadership development. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses states that the solidarity of Israel as a nation was dependent upon the sharing of wisdom, instruction, and knowledge from one generation to the next. The Great Commission is dependent upon the transference of what it means to walk as an imitator of Christ from one disciple to another as well. Mentorship is critical in developing leaders within next generation.

### **Principles of Mentoring from the New Testament**

The mentoring relationships established by Jesus Christ are the foundation upon which evangelical Christians must build their idea of biblical discipleship. But, even with a biblical overview and strong historical support for mentorship, we are still left with the question of what the process looks like today. What principles are transferable from the mentoring relationships that Jesus Christ had with the disciples to mentoring relationships in the church today?

As we saw in the previous sections, the foundation of a Christian mentoring relationship is God Himself, and with that knowledge in mind, logic demands that we use the methods God provides in Scripture. The most extensive example of God-initiated mentorship comes through the person of Christ Jesus. Therefore, we will focus on four key attributes which Jesus utilizes with His disciples in the Gospels: mentors initiate the relationship, mentors have purpose and direction for the relationship, mentors coach and train their followers for future ministry, and

lastly, mentors send those that have sat under them out to reproduce the system they have engaged in with others.

### Mentors Initiate the Relationship

In each of the four Gospels, Jesus calls each of the disciples; He calls them not just to a meeting, a weekly event, or a weekend retreat but to literally leave all that they have and to follow Him. This call is one of abandonment. They are to leave behind the life they were living and enter into a new way of life that Jesus will entrust to them through His teaching.

Initially, the call to discipleship goes out to Peter and Andrew in the books of Matthew and Mark. They were involved in their everyday lives, and Jesus beckons them, “Come, follow me, [...] and I will send you out to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed him” (Matt 4:19-20.) Not too long after Peter and Andrew follow Him, Jesus uses the same tactic of calling with the brothers James and John. Like Peter and Andrew before them, the brothers respond; Mark records, “When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him” (Mark 1:19-20.) In both of these scenarios, Jesus makes a selective call to specific people, and they act.

Even though the first two callings involve fishermen, it should not be assumed that Jesus only chose this type of person to follow Him, or in turn that fishermen were the only ones to listen. In fact, men of various occupations responded to Jesus with the same urgency. In Mark 2, a tax collector reacts in the same fashion. Mark writes, “As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.” Once again, Jesus calls a specific person.

Mentors call others to follow Jesus; He is the basis of every discipleship relationship. Like the early disciples, people will respond to mentorship because they believe that Jesus is who He said He was. Bonhoeffer writes, “Jesus summons men to follow him not as a teacher or a pattern of the good life, but as the Christ, the Son of God... We are not expected to contemplate

the disciple, but only him who calls, and his absolute authority. According to our text, there is no road to faith or discipleship, no other road—only obedience to the call of Jesus.”<sup>24</sup> We are not calling people into mentoring relationships to become like us. Instead we call them to learn from us how to follow more closely the one whom we are already following: Jesus, himself. This is the heart of Christian mentoring: to call people to follow Jesus. All mentoring relationships begin with a call to follow Jesus.

### Mentors Have Purpose and Direction for Their Relationships

Without a clear plan in place, mentoring relationships will fail. With this in mind, we will examine Christ’s direction and purpose for His relationship with His disciples—those who He was mentoring. However, in order to do this, we will look at the end goal of His relationship with them and work backwards because Christ’s goal for His mentoring relationships should be ours as well. The end result of a mentoring relationship with Jesus is clearly stated in the Great Commission passage. According to Matthew’s gospel, they are Christ’s last words that He spoke on earth. In Matthew 28, Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:18-20.) Christ’s purpose behind his time with the disciples was disciple, train, and then release them to invest in others.

In the same passage, Jesus also tells us what we are to teach or impart to others; He instructed the disciples to “[teach] them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20.) Christ shared many things with His disciples while on earth, but by examining His relationship with the disciples, we can see that the overarching categories of His instruction fall into two main areas: belief and faith in who He is, and an understanding and practice of the spiritual disciplines.

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<sup>24</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 58.

Though the previous section briefly examined the belief aspect of Jesus' mentorship of the disciples by looking at His calling of them, it only represented a small piece of the work and teachings Christ invested in this area. As mentioned above, the call, and subsequent response, to follow Christ is the ultimate test of belief and faith in who He is. Bonhoeffer reiterates this point writing, "The call to follow implies that there is only one way of believing on Jesus Christ, and that is by leaving all and going with the incarnate Son of God...If he refuses to follow and stays behind, he does not learn how to believe."<sup>25</sup> Their discipleship relationship with Christ began with His followers choosing to forsake all others and to follow Him. This in itself is an act of belief and faith; from the beginning, Christ's disciples had to believe that Jesus could meet their every need.

Understanding the disciples' immediate response to Jesus' call is important but delving into the belief and faith required to respond with such immediacy is just as important, if not more. To highlight the importance of belief in the character of Christ and what the disciples proclaimed by following Him, the Gospel of Luke chronicles three conversations that Jesus has with three separate men. The first conversation is found in Luke 9, and it begins with a young man stating to Jesus, "'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head'" (Luke 9:57-58.) This scenario highlights a lack of belief in Christ's ability to provide necessities, such as a place to sleep.

The second man's interaction begins with a call from Jesus to, "Follow me." But unlike the disciples' affirmative, this man responds, "'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' Jesus replied to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:59-60.) The indication of this passage is that the man wanted to wait until his dad was buried before following Jesus; his hesitation illustrates the fact he did not see who Jesus really was and subsequently missed the opportunity to walk with the Savior of the world.

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<sup>25</sup> Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 62.



The last scenario Luke records is about a man making a seemingly reasonable request when he says to Jesus, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family” (Luke 9:61.) Once again Jesus replies with a negative answer: “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62.) By stating this, Jesus proclaims that he desires sole allegiance to him and his purposes. In these three conversations between Jesus and the would-be disciples, each involves a concern for something more than Jesus be it property, family, or work. One could say that each of these men had noble intentions but when Jesus asserts his ultimate call for them to follow him, their property family, and vocations keep them from laying hold of it. Edwards states it this way, “If anything should qualify as a valid exception to Jesus’ exclusive call to discipleship—or as a postponement or modification of it—these should. Therein lie their danger and deception, for *no* reasons, no matter how worthy, can compensate for failing to accept the invitation to discipleship.”<sup>26</sup> Like the men in Luke’s stories, before we can follow Jesus, we must respond to the call he makes on our lives to leave the things we hold on to and grab onto a relationship with Him and Him alone.

By recording these three examples of men who doubted the call of Christ’s value, Luke allows us to see that the disciples’ choice to follow Jesus was one of belief and faith in Christ’s ability to provide, His character, and His worth. Oswald Sanders best explains the belief necessary to follow Jesus when he writes, “The Lord expects to be trusted. He disturbs us at will. Human arrangements are disregarded, family ties ignored, business claims put aside. We are never asked if it is convenient.”<sup>27</sup> Mentoring relationships are worth the effort and cost because they allow others the opportunity to grow and be shaped into the likeness of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords: Jesus Christ Himself.

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<sup>26</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 302.

<sup>27</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship*, 28.

The initial step of responding to Christ's call is not the only area that Jesus teaches on faith, believing, and following. Throughout His three-year journey with the disciples, Christ consistently reminds his followers to have faith in the God of Heaven and to believe in Jesus for who he is, God's Son. One way that Jesus teaches the disciples about his character is through provision. Twice Jesus feeds the masses; one time they number 5,000 (Matt 14:13-21.) After witnessing the miracle of Christ feeding the 5,000, one would think that the idea of feeding 4,000 would seem simple to the disciples (Matt 15:29-39.) However, once again they lacked faith, and once again he taught them to have faith in His ability to provide. This lack of faith by the disciples is mentioned by France, "It is also remarkable that after their previous experience they still seem to think only in terms of regular sources of supply (unless their *we* is emphatic, to indicate their own helplessness and to leave the way open for Jesus to make provision again)."<sup>28</sup> France, merely highlights the reality the learning process in which Jesus takes the disciples through in the mentoring journey. Not every situation is new to the disciples, in fact, some may be familiar, the hope is that the response will eventually become different.

Jesus also teaches the disciples to believe and have faith in His control over all things—including natural phenomena. In the Gospel of Mark, we find Jesus and the disciples in a boat when, "A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'" (Mark 4:37-38.) Once again, his followers' absence of faith is found in their response to him. And just as before, Jesus uses the situation as a teaching moment on faith and, "He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'" (Mark 4:39-40.) As a mentor teaching others about the character of

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<sup>28</sup> R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1 in Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 252.

God through himself, Jesus repeatedly taught the disciples to believe and to have faith in him; the examples above are a snapshot of the ways in which He instructed them on faith.

The realm of spiritual disciplines and their practice is another area that Christ instructs the disciples. If belief and faith in His character set the foundation of their relationship, spiritual disciplines were used to build the walls. In order for His followers to maintain a relationship with Him, especially after the ascension, Jesus mentored the disciples in what it looked like to practice the spiritual disciplines, particularly prayer. Jesus models prayer and its application multiple times throughout the gospels, but we will look at two key examples in which Jesus simultaneously uses teaching and application in order to build up the disciples and their understanding.

Each Gospel author mentions several occasions in which Jesus withdrew to pray; clearly it is an aspect of His character that stood out. One such example takes place in Mark 1. Mark writes, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35.) The disciples were not blind to this habit of His, because in the next verse, Mark tells us that they sought him out and brought him back to the crowds who were looking for Him. Luke expands upon Jesus’ praying habit and tells us that He did it often: “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16.) Jesus knew the value of prayer, and he modeled this to His followers through their time together. Because the disciples saw Jesus take prayer seriously, they saw its value and wanted to learn as well. One day they came upon him praying and simply asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Because Christ’s purpose for them was to grow in understanding spiritual disciplines, he taught them immediately; a record of it is found in Luke 11:2-4.

Another instance of Jesus’ coupling of teaching on prayer and then its direct application occurs in Mark 11. On a journey to Jerusalem, Jesus comes upon a leafed-out fig tree that bears no fruit; He proceeds to curse the tree, saying, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again” (Mark 11:14.) After that, Jesus and the disciples continue to Jerusalem, and upon their departure that evening, they pass the same fig tree. Peter notices in amazement that the tree they passed earlier

is now withered and destroyed. In response to the disciples' amazement, Jesus commands them to, "'Have faith in God. [...] Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' it will be done for them. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours'" (Mark 11:22-24.) Once again, Jesus expounds upon the discipline of prayer. It is more than a simple communion with the God of heaven and earth; it also involves a choice to have faith that He is able to do anything that we ask. Similarly put by Edwards, "It is a choice to trust in Jesus despite everything to the contrary, and to expect from him what cannot be expected from anything else in the world."<sup>29</sup>

Mentors need to have a purpose and direction for their relationships; it is imperative to the act of mentoring. Through examining the gospels, we see that Jesus' intention in his relationships was two-fold: the growth of the disciples' faith in him and his character as well as growing them in knowledge and understanding of the spiritual disciplines—specifically that of prayer. In his instruction of the disciples, we also see that Christ consistently paired teaching with application so that his followers would be able to experience and understand the implications of his instruction in their own lives. Jesus was intentional and directional, and these are two key aspects that Christian mentors must employ as well.

#### Mentors Coach and Train Their Followers for Future Ministry

As mentioned earlier, Jesus' mentorship of his disciples is the most extensive example of God-initiated mentoring contained in the Bible. Because the whole of Christ's ministry is contained in the Scriptures, the entirety of his mission was to train, invest, and ready the disciples to take up the very mission that he himself was on—spreading the good news that salvation had arrived. In the mentoring, there are several methods for coaching and training followers, and we will focus on three main ones that Jesus employs with his followers: self-

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<sup>29</sup> Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 347.

discovery of knowledge, the utilization of teachable moments, and the practice of hands-on application.

An important fact for mentors to understand is that people retain the most knowledge when they discover an answer on their own. This statement does not advocate for allowing others to fumble around like someone looking for a needle in a haystack, but it does encourage mentors to point others in the direction of the truth and then watch them learn. Jesus employs this method of learning with his disciples on multiple occasions; one of them takes place in Matthew 16. One day, as he and the disciples are walking along, he turns to them and asks, “‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’” (Matt 16:13.) The disciples reply, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (Matt 16:14.) At this point in the conversation, Jesus could have stopped, set up school, and taught them a lesson on Old Testament prophecy and how He had fulfilled it (notwithstanding all of the miracles they had witnessed that also attested to who He was). But instead, He asks another question, “‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’” (Matt 16:15.) Peter answers, stating, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16.) In this moment, Peter makes a discovery and a confession of his belief in one simple answer. Christ allows Peter to do both by giving him ownership of the information presented. Jesus presented truth and then encouraged the disciples to own and understand it. Sometimes this coaching came through the question and answer format and other instances it plays out through parables, but regardless of the method, the end goal was the same—the disciples’ ownership of the truth.

Another training method that Jesus used to prepare His followers for future ministry is teaching them significant lessons within the context of everyday life. In Matthew 20, the mother of James and John approaches Jesus and asks Him, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom” (Matt 20:21.) When the other disciples find out about the request, “They were indignant with the two” (Matt 20:24.) Instead of ridiculing the disciples for their childishness, Jesus uses the opportunity to teach them that the

kingdom of Heaven is entirely different than the kingdoms of the earth. The ruling structure they knew—and that we know today—is top-down. Jesus instead instructs them, saying that,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:25-28.)

Jesus uses this real-life opportunity to impart a simple truth to his disciples: things in the future are not as they seem today. In moments when tensions are high and lack of understanding is apparent, simple coaching and instruction can shape and change the perception of all involved. Jesus masterfully uses everyday life to train His followers.

Jesus also utilizes hands on practice to train and coach the disciples. Like trade unions and medical residency programs today, the idea behind this method is to take what one has learned in theory and apply it under the watchful eye of a mentor. In Luke 10, Jesus sends the disciples with instructions to go out into the towns (Luke 10:1-2), taking nothing with them (Luke 10:4) and when they reach a house, bless it, and stay there (Luke 10:4.) He then further instructs them to heal the sick and tell others that the Kingdom is near (Luke 10:8-9) and completes His instruction by telling them to then return to Him and tell Him all that they have seen. Luke says that after their sending, “The seventy-two returned with joy” (Luke 10:17), and Jesus capitalizes on the moment to give them feedback. Joel Comiskey writes, “Jesus seized the opportunity to instruct them and to offer additional guidelines: ‘Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven’ (Luke 10:20.)”<sup>30</sup> Instead of simply leaving the disciples in their joy of what they could do in Jesus’ name, he redirects them to their true joy—eternity with him—and at the same time returns their focus to his mission, spreading the news that the kingdom is at hand.

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<sup>30</sup> Comiskey, *The Relational Disciple*.

Jesus employs many methods to train up his followers, but three in particular stand out in the Gospels. Like Christ, Christian mentors should utilize self-discovery of knowledge, particularly through question and answer scenarios, teachable moments, and hands-on training. It is critically important to understand the concept that mentoring is based on life situations and how we respond, learn, or adapt to them while seeking how to best model our relationship with Christ in the midst of each moment. This is why a model of mentoring in which an older individual is paired with a younger may prove beneficial as their life experience exceeds that of who they are investing in. As we can see, each of these coaching techniques allow mentors to train their followers in such a way that those being mentored can then raise up and teach new followers thus continuing the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

#### Mentors Send Out Disciples to Replicate the Process

The last, and possibly most important, aspect of a mentoring relationship is that the mentor must send off their disciples to make new disciples of their own. If a mentor cannot do this, then a key component of mentorship has been missed. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus sends His disciples out on the Great Commission—an act that is credited with spreading the gospel throughout the world in New Testament times as well as today.

The principle of mentor replication gives life to the Great Commission in Matthew 28. Instead of focusing solely on gathering large groups of people, teaching to the masses, and making sure that as many people as possible heard his message before his ascension, Jesus went all in on mentoring a select few men, twelve to be exact. In order for salvation to spread to the ends of the earth, he made the primary means of communication relationships. Engstrom and Jensen expand on this idea:

Jesus ministered to many, but he focused on a few. Paul, Timothy, and Silas ministered to many but they, too, focused on a few. What makes this strategy so compelling? Why did Jesus and his disciples narrow their attention to small groups of people? Because they understood the secret of living forward—spiritual multiplication through intentionally influencing a few people at a time. They knew that by concentrating on a few faithful men and women they would leave behind them a legacy of people whose influence would

extend beyond a generation or two; in fact, a legacy that would continue to multiply until the return of the Lord.”<sup>31</sup>

As a church, the legacy of relational investment is still being lived out among us. The knowledge and information that is passed on in Christian mentorship is not new but focuses on the same teachings that Jesus shared with the original twelve.

The spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ is easily traced through the New Testament after the four Gospels, and as highlighted above, its means is mentorship that focuses singularly on the person of Christ and His mission. In Acts, the disciples needed to choose a new disciple to replace Judas, and instead of being left lost, they had many candidates based on their mentoring relationships with others (Acts 1:12-26.) Mentorship and its practice is found later in Acts in the instance of the disciples caring for Paul after his conversion (Acts 9:10-20.) In each of Paul’s letters, mentorship is clearly practiced as he instructs others about Jesus and His mission and exhorts them to be imitators of God (Eph 5), to live a life worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10), to pattern themselves after Christ (Rom 12:1-8), and ultimately, to be an example of Christ to others (1 Cor 11:1.) The good news spread through discipleship practiced on a personal and intimate level.

According to John Dodson, all discipleship, or Christian mentoring, starts with Jesus and ends with pointing others to Jesus. Dodson writes,

When Jesus sends, he sends not merely to evangelize but in his power to make disciples. Under his authority, the so-called Great Commission begins with Jesus, not our great effort, and ends with Jesus—“I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). The mission of making disciples starts and finishes with Jesus. As we will see, this is what truly makes the Great Commission great—Jesus.”<sup>32</sup>

Christian mentoring relationships make Jesus and His mission known—a proclamation that is traced back to Jesus’ original send-off of His disciples thousands of years ago.

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<sup>31</sup> Ted W. Engstrom and Ron Jenson, *The Making of a Mentor: 9 Essential Characteristics of Influential Christian Leaders* (Waynesboro: Authentic and World Vision, 2005), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), Kindle.



## Conclusion

Christ emphasized four primary areas in His relationship with the disciples that we can utilize as mentors today. Jesus initiated the relationship, had a purpose and direction for their time together, trained and coached His followers for future ministry, and sent the disciples out to reproduce the same mentoring relationship with others. Each of these elements are critical to mentorship and should be practiced in Christian discipleship relationships so that the good news might not be hindered.

### **Why the Church Must Focus on Mentoring Millennials**

Millennials are the largest, most educated, and most optimistic generation to ever walk the earth; and at the same time, they also comprise the highest percentage of people walking away from church. Research includes that Millennials have a strong desire for community, leadership, and to be mentored, and according to the literature above, these three things should be the backbone of congregational life. If these things are embedded in the DNA of the church, then why are Millennials walking away?

Though the above question is difficult to ask, it demands that the church take a hard look inward and ask more questions that are deep and potentially troubling. Are we still utilizing the methods that Jesus taught us through His relationship with the disciples? Or have we gone a different way—one in which we try to gather as many people as possible in one place to preach the gospel of Jesus with the hope that some will be saved, but by doing so, missing the truth that without intentional mentorship we will not replace our leaders, but be left only with hearers and not doers. Many believe that the Western church finds itself falling into the affirmative for the second scenario as opposed to the first. Dallas Willard makes this very assertion when he writes, “For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian...So far as the visible Christian institutions of our day are

concerned, discipleship clearly is optional.”<sup>33</sup> Though Willard’s indictment is harsh, the trajectory he states is based on truth; it is time for us to reevaluate and set new coordinates.

Enter Millennials. At no other time in history has there been a generation of people—not to mention the largest generational cohort that has ever walked the planet—whose desires have lined up so closely with many of the very things that the church and its people are instructed to do. Comiskey writes, “The post-modern culture desires authentic communication with people. They are saying, ‘We don’t want to do church without loving relationships.’ Younger people in general are far more open to community and relationships than their predecessors. The emerging church is hungry for Christ-like relationships and reality-based ministry. . . . Generation Next longs for a relational form of church—one that views ministry in terms of relationally-based New Testament ministry rather than techniques and programs that are supposed to make the church grow.”<sup>34</sup> If Millennials are looking for intentional relationships, the church should be encouraged. Jesus left behind a history of discipleship for us to study and pattern our pursuit of Him and His mission after. As a church, we must simply step back and reevaluate our path and assess the changes that need to take place.

The church is doing and has always done much good in the world. But as we look to pass down leadership to the next generation, we see that generation walking away. I believe, as many do, that God is using Millennials to shine a light on a legitimate need that is for all generations—the building of disciples, and ultimately leaders, through mentorship. Millennials are asking us to evaluate and review our practices, and in doing so, we can seek Him and His mission above all. Above all, this chapter provides the theological framework for intergenerational mentoring for the use of developing Christ centered disciples but also leaders for local congregations. This theological framework was necessary to establish the biblical fidelity of the thesis-project.

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<sup>33</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*.

<sup>34</sup> Comiskey, *The Relational Disciple*.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PROJECT DESIGN**

Having examined relevant literature to better understand the needs and characteristics of Millennials and establishing a biblical model for mentoring, this chapter offers a detailed explanation of the project. The project is designed to integrate mentors from previous generational cohorts into the lives of Millennial college students. In doing so, the mentoring relationship will be a catalyst for Millennials to continue attending, and more importantly, serving in leadership positions within a local congregation during their college years. At this time, many congregations do not provide an intergenerational discipleship or mentoring model or the resources to do so; therefore, this project will also focus on providing a framework for intergenerational mentorship. Before looking at the framework for the mentorship model we will first look at two key elements that were used to help in the design of this project.

The first element used in designing this project was utilizing current literature alongside student background surveys in an effort to find a characteristic that a local congregation could address in effort to meet the needs of collegiate Millennials. One of the primary characteristics of Millennials, supported by both the literature reviewed and surveys received, was they desire to be mentored by adults outside of their generational cohort. Based on this knowledge, the focus of the project narrowed to mentoring in local congregations. From here, the desired outcomes of this mentoring program were assessed and outlined; this step was relatively easy as the previous chapters have shown that involvement of Millennials within local congregations is declining and in turn is leading to a shortage of new leadership for congregations. Because of the decline of Millennial church involvement and the subsequent shortage of new leadership in congregations, this project was designed to look at whether a mentoring program could help local congregations reach collegiate Millennials in one or both of these areas.

The second helpful design element utilized in this project was the biblical framework laid out in the previous chapter. It helped to define what the program would look like in the context of a local congregation and aided in outlining elements that mentors could utilize in training mentees to be their replacement in the future. Some of these key elements found within the biblical framework included: the mentor was further ahead in life and ministry than the mentee, the mentoring relationship was not simply knowledge-based but involved an element of doing ministry together, a mentor shared life with the mentee – they traveled together, ate together, did ministry together, and the hope at the end of the relationship is that the mentor would be able to be replaced in his role by the mentee in which he had invested.

With an understanding of several significant elements in which this project was designed around, we will now look at the actual project design. The entire project occurred in five phases: assessing the mentoring needs of college students in Norman, OK and Tuscaloosa, AL through a pre-mentoring survey, developing a resource guide for mentoring relationships to meet the expressed needs of college students at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Alabama, recruiting adult mentors and student participation, implementing the resource guide in the adult-student mentoring context, and conducting a post-mentoring survey. The following sections of this chapter explores the development and execution of each of these phases.

### **College Student Pre-Mentoring Survey**

The college student survey occurred before the development of the mentoring resource guide in order to assess the expressed needs of college students for mentoring relationships.<sup>35</sup> This survey was designed, executed, and analyzed on Formstack, an online form generator. All online surveys had the option of anonymity. Regardless of this information supplied, each survey participant was provided a detailed explanation of how the data would be used to test this thesis. This was a required field, providing assent was the only way in which to continue the survey.

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendix A.

The pre-mentoring survey provided a means of evaluating a variety of issues for this project's thesis; the rationale and purpose of the different groups of questions will be summarized.

### Background Information

The pre-mentoring student survey began by gathering information about the student's background. It was important to gather background information to see what differences or similarities could be made between the local congregation and the demographic of the university's student population, as well as identify any common traits of students attending these universities. The purpose behind the background information was to help discern the demographics for which the mentoring resource guide might need to be contextualized for a congregation reaching a specific university. The reality is many public universities bring in a wide range of students, and that creates an atypical population distinct to college towns. For instance, the University of Oklahoma states on their website that currently 43% of its students are from out of state.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the University of Alabama's discloses on their website that 56% of its student population is from out of state.<sup>37</sup>

### Leadership Background

The second section of the pre-mentoring student survey gauged the level of leadership that the student had prior to college and while in college. Additionally, participants were asked whether or not mentoring was provided within these leadership positions and how this impacted their development as leaders. Assessing this information helps us make a case that a mentoring program within the context of a local congregation could actually channel students to become leaders in their current congregation during their college years.

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<sup>36</sup> "OU Facts," accessed November 18, 2018, [http://www.ou.edu/web/admissions\\_aid](http://www.ou.edu/web/admissions_aid).

<sup>37</sup> "Quick Facts," The University of Alabama, accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.ua.edu/about/quickfacts>.

This leadership background section was not limited to merely understanding the positions, responsibilities, and access to mentoring that students received. It also provided access to information about students who were not involved in leadership positions, previously or currently, and whether or not the mentoring incentive would have increased their likelihood in considering a leadership position. If this data shows a student not involved in a leadership position would have likely participated if they knew there was a mentoring opportunity, it will only substantiate the claims made in the literature review section.

### Mentoring and Development Preferences

The third section of the pre-mentoring student survey gathered information in order to develop an effective mentoring resource guide that mentors and students would use later on in this project. The questions asked required students to describe past experiences, if any, in mentoring relationships. If a student had previously participated in a church offering a mentoring process, he or she was asked to provide further details: the information covered, age demographic of mentors, frequency of meetings, positive aspects of the program, and how they developed as a leader their local congregation. The value of these questions was to help in the formation of materials and resources for the creation of the mentoring resource guide. This information would provide helpful insight into key components of this project's mentoring resource guide including, but not limited to, frequency of meetings, student preferences on material covered, and size of mentoring groups.

Similar to questions within the background section, the mentoring and development section also included questions that asked participants about their current involvement in a local congregation. If the participants answered "no," a second set of questions would then ask whether or not a mentoring process would have led to an increased, personal interest in being involved in a local congregation. These questions stemmed from the evidence shown in the literature review that Millennials are leaving the church after and that they place a high value on mentoring.

Therefore, if a church were to provide mentoring opportunities for collegiate Millennials, would they rejoin or reconsider participating in a local congregation?

### **Mentoring Resource Development Process**

The development of a mentoring resource guide for use in this project depended on the feedback provided by students in the pre-mentoring survey. The hope would also be that the resource could be transferable for a student to use in a different context to begin to mentor someone else behind them.

The pre-mentoring survey proved helpful as a guiding point to assess students' backgrounds and preferences. Based upon this information, along with researching various mentoring programs available online, the process of developing the layout and content for the guide began. It was important that mentors not become overwhelmed in the details but would provide just enough specifics to help them effectively mentor students. Time was also spent to determine the best way to organize and present information with the understanding that each mentor/student relationship would reflect unique personalities, strengths and gifts of each individual.

With this in mind, this researcher set out to write a mentoring resource for mentors to utilize during their time in mentoring relationships.<sup>38</sup> The resource provided both principles and practicalities: specific scenarios for counseling, how to prepare for a meeting, along with other general ideas, questions, and resources that each mentor could tailor for the unique mentoring situation.

The goal of developing a mentoring resource was not necessarily to develop a curriculum, but rather a set of norms and expectations of what the mentoring relationship would look like from the bird's eye view. Again, these principles would then dictate a variety of practicalities of initiating, forming, and sustaining the relationship. While a curriculum would

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix B.

have been easiest, it would not have provided the inherent flexibility that is necessary. A curriculum would not be able to consider the different needs, experiences, and leadership background of each student. This is why the principles of spiritual growth and leadership acumen were established as parameters, and flexibility was given for practicalities such as topics to study, asking discussion-based questions, and steering the relationship based on the needs of the student.

### **Recruiting Participants**

The next step in the project was participant recruitment. Due to the nature of a job transition I was able to recruit, train, and survey students and mentors in congregations in multiple locations.<sup>39</sup> The first congregation was in Norman, OK reaching students from the University of Oklahoma and the second was in Tuscaloosa, AL with students from the University of Alabama.

In both locations' students were recruited from our college ministry's leadership team to participate in a mentoring program that would meet weekly for both the fall and spring semesters. The mentors were recruited based on pre-existing relationships or recommendations to the college staff department. It was a prerequisite that each mentor selected had background experience in mentoring programs or discipleship relationships. This could include, but was not limited to: having been mentored, been through a mentoring training program, or was currently mentoring an individual. Each mentor completed a "get-to-know-you" form which aided the staff in the pairing process. For example, if a student was studying a particular field that a mentor works in, we tried to assign them together. If a mentor had similar hobbies or background experiences as a student, we tried to pair them together. The hope was that these commonalities would permit relationships to start easily and more naturally. Along with the initial form,

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<sup>39</sup> This researcher transitioned from serving as the College Pastor at Wildwood Community Church in Norman, OK in late December of 2017 and into serving as the College Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, AL beginning January 2018. The transition was based on utilization of the researcher's gifts and size of ministry scope.



mentors participated in a two-part training to understand how to utilize the mentoring resources. One meeting would occur before the start of each semester and included vision-casting, equipping and encouragement. These meetings kept the goal at the forefront: to encourage and equip students in their walk with Christ and help them to discover and utilize their gifts in order to connect within the local congregation.

### **Post-Mentoring Survey**

The purpose of the post-mentoring survey was to get feedback from both mentors and students as to how the mentoring program was going. This would allow the ability to make any needed changes to the program moving forward and to assess whether the mentors and students were finding the program to be beneficial. The post-mentoring survey occurred after a full season of mentoring, a fall and spring semester, had finished.<sup>40</sup> The post-mentoring survey was designed and executed through Formstack, an online form generator, to gather and analyze the data results effectively. Each survey, like the pre-mentoring survey had the option of anonymity or providing a name with the understanding of the data usage. This section will look at the rationale of the questions asked in this survey through comparing its structure to the pre-mentoring survey.

### **Similarities**

Both pre- and post-surveys are semi-structured in nature allowing for the use of open and closed ended questions. The purpose behind utilizing both open and closed ended survey questions was to allow the student or mentor an opportunity to provide feedback that may or may not stem from a question asked within a structured survey. Therefore, both forms balanced choice fields and free-response fields to elicit the most effective responses for the purposes of evaluation. This type of feedback creates a clearer understanding of the needs of students and mentors alike, as well as helpful input to continually improve the mentoring resource guide and

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<sup>40</sup> See Appendix C.

training of mentors. Without this non-structured option, it would have required more time and difficulty to pinpoint necessary ways to improve mentoring process and structure at large.

### Differences

Despite the similar nature of both forms, there were still more differences than similarities between the pre-mentoring and the post-mentoring surveys. This was intentional in order to receive necessary feedback without asking the same questions already inquired, and answered, from the pre-mentoring survey. With this in mind, the post-mentoring survey did not ask the student to tell us anything about their background information or their previous and current leadership experiences as these were already known.

Secondly, the post-curriculum survey was also given to mentors participating in the mentoring process. Mentors were not included in the pre-mentoring survey because, again, the focus of this project was centered on whether or not a student would connect and lead in their local congregation if a mentoring process was available. It was already assumed that the mentors involved were connected and leading within the local congregation; in fact, this was a requirement prior to their selection.

The other differences between the pre and post-mentoring surveys involved the types of questions asked. While the majority of questions for the pre-mentoring survey focused on summarizing and evaluating the needs and preferences of students, the post-mentoring survey focused on evaluating this mentoring process and how effectively it achieved its intended purpose. These findings came from questions such as: How long did you meet? What topics did you cover? Did you connect well with your mentor? Did you feel like this mentoring process helped you grow spiritually as a Christian and as a leader? How likely would you recommend this mentoring process to a friend? Each of these questions were aimed at understanding if the initial responses given by the students, when assimilated into a program, met their expressed desires and preferences.

With the evaluative nature of the post-mentoring survey, other questions were not necessarily able to be asked in the pre-mentoring survey without first participating in the mentoring process of this project. Therefore, questions such as, “How well did you connect with your mentor?” and “Tell us one or two things you would like to be different in the future mentoring programs” could only be asked at the conclusion of the year. These questions catalyzed the refining processes for pairing students, coaching mentors, and addressing obstacles that students and mentors faced. The post-mentoring survey proved extremely helpful for the continuation of the mentoring program in the years to come.

### Conclusion

As stated in previous sections, the church faces a long road in the application and implementation of becoming intergenerational through the mentoring process. At times this can be mind-boggling since the Bible speaks almost explicitly to the mentoring relationship of older generations teaching the younger. (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:1-8) However, as many North American congregations have implemented age-group ministries to reach specific generational demographics, it unintendedly created a disconnect between when generations would interact with each other. In many ways, the shift in age-group ministries has created a silo effect between generations and limiting the intergenerational model of the church. Though it will require further refinement and investigation, this is a pivotal foundation to build on. The next chapter will discuss how the data from the pre-mentoring and post-mentoring surveys can retain and develop Millennials for leadership in its congregations through an intergenerational mentoring process.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROJECT OUTCOMES**

In this chapter we will examine the results after implementing the project. The thesis-project affirms current trends towards Millennials' desire for mentoring and leadership development within the local church and other organizations. Particular contents of the mentoring resource packet will be elaborated as pre-mentoring survey results are discussed.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the mentoring program will be analyzed through the utilization of a post-curriculum survey.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Pre-Mentoring Survey Results**

Before drawing out some potential implications from this specific project, it is important to first look at the insights discovered from the pre-mentoring survey that could provide clearer understanding to the project's overall outcome. With future research considerations, this section will report the most significant, tabulated results from the pre- and post-curriculum evaluations. For the complete report providing all results, please refer to Appendices D and F.

#### **Demographic Results based upon the Pre-Mentoring Survey**

There were 119 respondents to the pre-mentoring survey.<sup>3</sup> Some key attributes of this study group include:

1. Age: 88% born between the years 1995 and 1998.
2. Previous Church Attendance: 92% attended church prior to coming to college while only 5% started attending church during college.
3. Current Church Attendance: 90.7% answered yes and 9.3% answered no.
4. Gender: 71.4% female.
5. Ethnicity: 96% white.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices A and B.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>3</sup> 119 people participated in the pre-mentoring survey. The responders were not required to answer every question, so there may be less than 119 total responses for certain questions in Appendix D.

6. Parents Marital Status: 77.3% of students came from families where both biological parents are still married.
7. Economic Background: 69.8% students came from families with an income level between \$75,000 to \$150,000 or more.

There are important underlying variables in each of the percentages listed above that pertain to the type of student involved in this thesis project group. Therefore, we will spend some time some unpacking the significance of these variables and the implications they have on the research and conclusions of this project.

In moving forward, it is also important to keep in mind two important realities: The first reality, that cannot be overstated, is this thesis project was limited to college students currently enrolled in classes at these college campuses. Not only that, but it was limited to college students who were on two specific campuses: The University of Oklahoma and The University of Alabama. Therefore, a case cannot be made for previous trends or percentages on either of these campuses for the entirety of all Millennials (1980 to 2001 as noted in Chapter 2). Instead, this project can only provide a window at the current makeup of the student demographics on both campuses at the time of the project thesis. The second reality is such: While the key percentages above give an overview of the participants in this thesis project, each participant was not required to answer every question. Therefore, each of the percentages listed above are not an exact measure from the sample selected for this student. The reason that time will be spent to understand the dynamics, and their inherent limitations, of the project group is to help set the stage for Chapter 6 which will further discuss the limitations of this research project along with other applications.

#### A Closer Look at the Numbers:

##### Age, Previous Church Attendance, and Current Church Attendance

The first percentage to discuss from the above attributes is the 88% of students surveyed who were born between the years of 1995 and 1998. Obviously, these years do not make up the entirety of Millennials, however, that was not necessarily the goal of this research project. On the

contrary, the purpose of this project was to study the impact that mentoring would have on Millennials by using a sample of Millennials currently on a college campus. Therefore, it makes more sense why 88% of those taking the survey were born between the ages of 1995 and 1998 as those are the current students on college campuses. It is actually advantageous that there is an outstanding 12% of those surveyed who, still falling within the generational time frame designated for Millennials, were not born between the years of 1995-1998. This is because, though still limited by the overwhelming 88% majority, some wider conclusions can be drawn about the impact of mentoring once outside the “traditional” age of college students on campus.

Two percentages that follow this survey’s age demographic denote the percentages of students who attended church prior to coming to college and of students who began, and are currently attending church, while in college. There is no real way to fully understand how the interviewee’s might have interpreted the word, “attend” as the survey did not give a specific definition as to its meaning. This means both of these percentages could contain students who self-defined “attend” as every Sunday and serve in the local church, “attend” a midweek service, “attend” a service a couple times a month, or it could simply mean a student is interpreting the question as merely a denominational affiliation. This limitation is pertinent to this project and the pre-mentoring survey because of the geographical locations where these surveys took place. The states of Oklahoma and Alabama, and inevitably their college campuses, rate not only in the top ten of religiously Protestant states, but both also rate in the top six of religiously Protestant states.<sup>4</sup> These national statistics would lead to an expectation that most students in college within Alabama or Oklahoma have previously “attended” before coming to a college campus: an unsurprising 92% as the survey revealed.

Regardless of how a participant understood and defined the word “attend” for themselves, the survey did further support the evidence discussed in the literature review that for Millennials who attend college, these college years begin a significant turning point for their spiritual lives;

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<sup>4</sup> “The Religiously Distinct States of America,” Gallup, February 9, 2018, accessed August 19, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/226844/religiously-segregated-states-america.aspx>.

specifically, their decision of remaining connected to a local body of believers. The pre-survey determined that 92% of students attended church before college and 5% started attending while in college whereas 90.7% attend a church while in college and 9.3% are not attending church in college. What these percentages show is that even in the southern regions of the United States, where denominational and church affiliations are strongest, we are beginning to see a small shift away from involvement in the local church. While we can be encouraged that some students begin attending church for the first time in college, we still see the presence of a downward shift of those attending and those no longer attending once they come to college. It appears that this finding matches the previous observation that Millennials who attend college are slowly leaving the church within this age demographic. Hopefully, because of mentoring programs, we can begin to see these percentages slope upward once again.

#### A Closer Look at the Numbers: Gender and Ethnicity

When beginning to unpack the gender and ethnicity percentages, it is important for us to have a point of comparison for these percentages. Therefore, below you will find a chart comparing gender and ethnicity percentages at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Alabama in relation to the gender and ethnicity percentages of those surveyed for this thesis project.

Table 2: Gender and Ethnic Comparisons

Demographic Category	The University of Oklahoma <sup>5</sup>	The University of Alabama <sup>6</sup>	Compared to Project Survey
<b>Undergraduate Student Population</b>	<b>21,297</b>	<b>31,958</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Male</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
<b>White</b>	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>76.4%</b>	<b>95.8%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>1.68%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.84%</b>
<b>Latino</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>0.84%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

As one can see from the Table 2, there is some variation between the overall demographics of The University of Oklahoma and The University of Alabama. The most notable difference is the demographic diversity; The University of Oklahoma is noticeably more diverse across multiple ethnicities while the University of Alabama has a higher percentage of black students than the University of Oklahoma. The variations between these two universities, however, are not as dramatic as the gender and ethnic variations between the students surveyed for this thesis project and these two universities overall.

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<sup>5</sup> “America’s Best Value Colleges,” accessed November 24, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/colleges/university-of-oklahoma/>.

<sup>6</sup> “America’s Best Value Colleges,” accessed November 24, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/colleges/the-university-of-alabama/>.

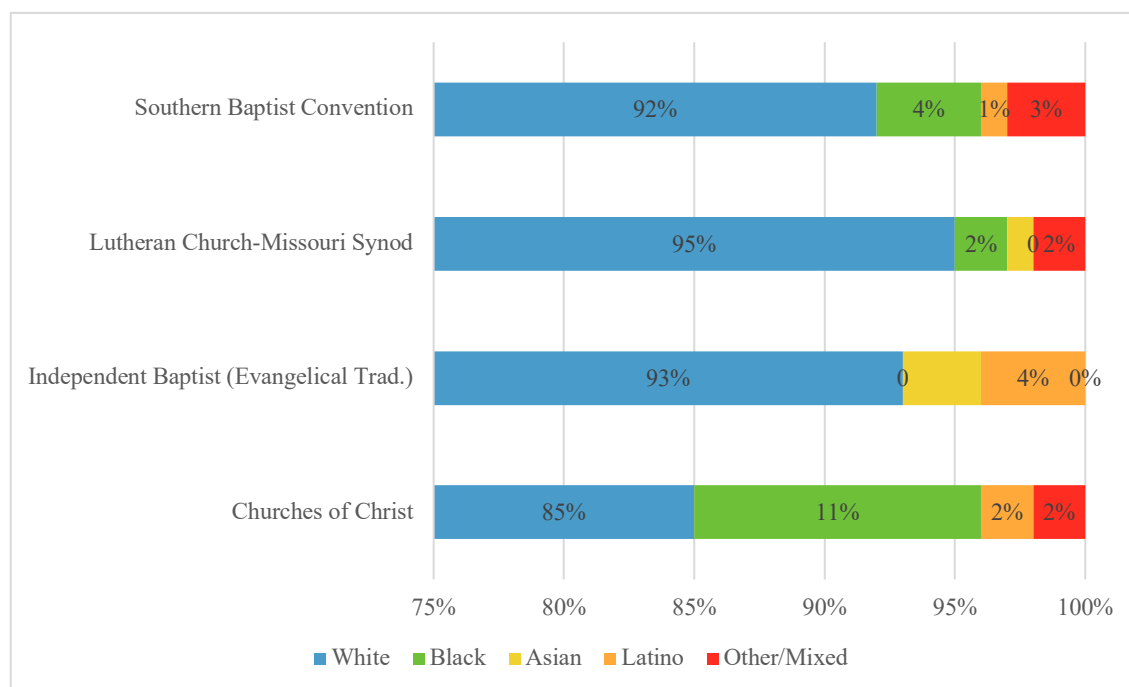


After looking at Table 2, we can quickly ascertain that the data from the students surveyed is limited by its lack of ethnic diversity. In order to examine this study's limits, it is of foremost importance to understand the geographic implications of students surveyed. The pre-survey questionnaire was given at both universities, though not in equal quantities, due to a job transition. So while this project did span two universities, the data is not equal and cannot be concluded as equal. For instance, this project began in Norman, OK just before a job transition to Tuscaloosa, AL. In Norman, there were only 33 students who participated in the pre-survey questionnaire that attended the University of Oklahoma. The project was continued in more depth in Tuscaloosa, AL where 84 more participants took part in the survey. This leaves just two participants of the pre-survey questionnaire having attended another university entirely. What this means is that the column with greater representation is The University of Alabama and not necessarily The University of Oklahoma. Therefore, gender and racial demographics for the pre-survey questionnaire skews in the same two areas that The University of Oklahoma and The University of Alabama differentiate: the majority of female participants, and the participants' ethnicities denoted as either "White" or "Other."

Second, although Table 2 shows a limitation on ethnic diversity, it does not consider the context, history, or denominational demographics of the local churches where this project took place. Just because a college, like either of the two universities represented in this study, represents gender or ethnic demographics in a certain way does not necessarily mean the project can, or should, represent these same biases. This is a limitation of the use of this project as one must consider the implications for not only university demographics, but also denominational demographics where the mentoring portion of this project's study occurred. It is with denominational demographics and biases in mind that we will discuss the following charts based

upon the study done by the Pew Research Center. The first chart represents the racial and ethnic compositions among four evangelical denominations<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1: Racial and Ethnic Composition Among Evangelical Protestant Denominations



The importance of the racial and ethnic composition of these four Evangelical denominations from the above chart cannot be understated for the purpose of this project. As noted earlier, 84 of the participants surveyed attended Calvary Baptist Church located in Tuscaloosa, AL. What this chart describes is that, by majority, Southern Baptist Churches (SBC) are predominately White (92%). Because Calvary is part of the SBC, this chart explains much of the single, racial and ethnic composition (again, predominantly White) data provided from participants for this project. While the other 33 participants in the survey attended an independent or non-denominational church in Norman, OK that congregation operates as an

<sup>7</sup> "Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics," Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, May 11, 2015, Accessed August 19, 2018, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/compare/racial-and-ethnic-composition/by/religious-denomination/among/generational-cohort/silent/religious-tradition/evangelical-protestant/>.

evangelical traditional church. According to Figure 1, predominantly white makeup of the sample population is to be expected from this type of congregation. This means that both of the congregations in this study do not reflect the demographic makeups of the University and this is a limitation of this particular study and will limit the conclusions that can be drawn.

Again, when we reflect on Table 2, we can see that another limitation of this survey involves gender; therefore, the chart below examines gender compositions of evangelical churches by religious denomination<sup>8</sup>:

Figure 2: Gender Composition among Evangelical Protestants by Religions Denomination

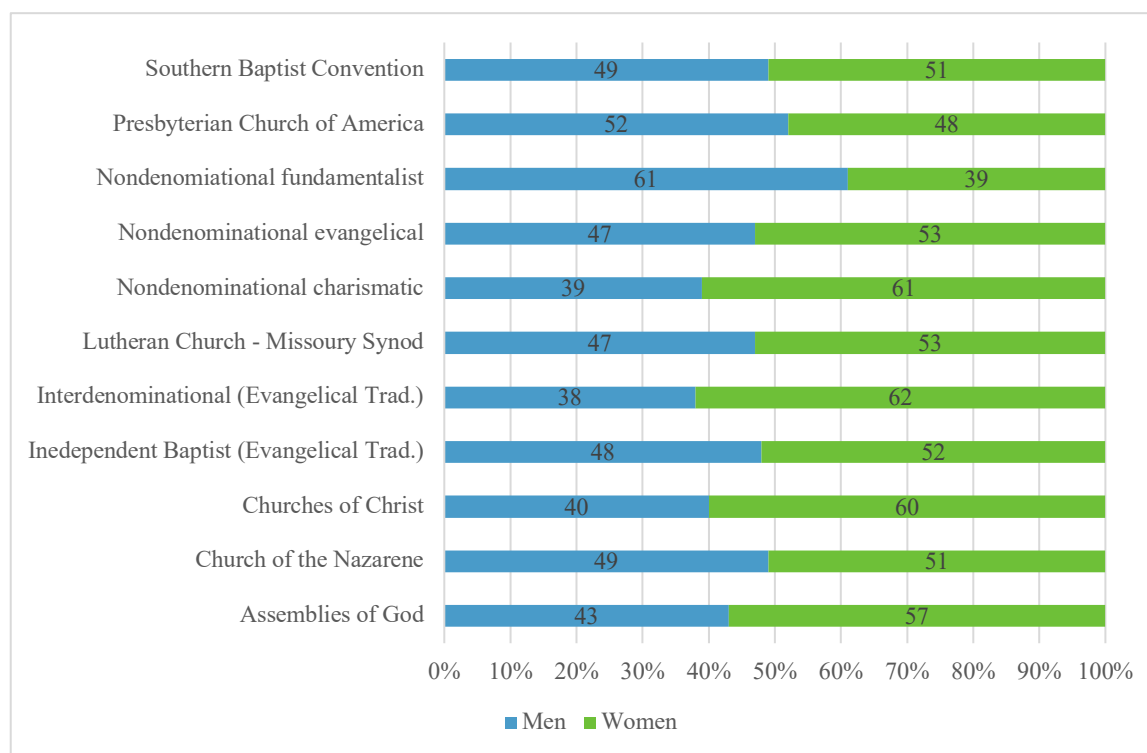


Figure 2 shows us there is a slight leaning to the female gender in both the Southern Baptist Convention (51% women versus 49% men) and in non-denominational evangelical congregations (53% women and 47% men). Based on Figure 2, we can expect the proportion of

<sup>8</sup> Eric Limer, "Gender composition among Evangelical Protestants by religious denomination," Pew Research Center, 2018, accessed August 19, 2018, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/compare/gender-composition/by/religious-denomination/among/religious-tradition/evangelical-protestant/>.

women to men participating in this survey to be higher. It is not only necessary to examine the universities' gender population because denominational demographics also played an inevitable role in the survey's results. Figure 2 does not provide the basis of eliminating the bias of female participation entirely, as our survey had a significantly higher number of women participants than men. However, it does help us understand why there would be more females in our pre-mentoring survey than males when examining denominational backgrounds and their inherent impact on this study.

Great length has been taken early in this chapter to show the impact of denominational settings in which the survey and participants affiliated themselves. While one can glance at the demographics of both public universities where students participated in the survey and see skews in this study, however, the denominational statistics permit the percentages of our study to settle as somewhat more normative. This means that the principles found within this study can be applied more universally, however, the data for this project and its conclusions are contextualized for the use in a predominantly White, evangelical community.

#### A Closer Look at the Numbers: Marital Status and Economic Background

The last two percentages that are important for understanding the demographic backgrounds of students who participated in the pre-mentoring survey are related to the parents' marital statuses and the economic backgrounds the students come from. These percentages seemingly fall in line with the national averages for students who graduate high school and go on to pursue a college degree. While the numbers also affirm the inequality behind higher education that tends to favor the students of a high-income, two-parent household, the intent of this thesis project is not the dissection of this inequality.<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of this project, the existence of

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<sup>9</sup> Min Zhan and Shanta Pandey, "Economic Well-being of Single Mothers: Work First or Postsecondary Education?," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, Vol. 31 : Iss. 3, Article 6 (2004).

this inequality needs to be acknowledged and understood as a main factor that impacted the pre-survey findings for participants' family backgrounds.

The percentages will be discussed in tandem because income level and two-parent relationships are correlated positively in most cases. While exceptions are always present, a child coming from a two-parent environment has a much higher chance of having the financial opportunity to attend college than a peer who comes from a single-parent environment.<sup>10</sup> To state it this way: A family's household income increases in a two-parent household as either one or both parents have an opportunity to bring in an income. It is the financial implications of marital status that account for a student's increased chances of higher education. This reality is becoming more and more of the case as the number of women attending college and earning degrees has greatly increased the earning potential of a two-parent family unit.<sup>11</sup>

In this pre-mentoring survey, 77.3% of students came from a two-parent household and 69.8% of those came from families with an income between \$75,000 and \$150,000 a year. It is important to note these numbers do not even account for income inequality between two-parent families of different ethnicities which, undoubtedly, is another factor that could influence correlations and causations between the key attributes of the types of students who participated in the pre-mentoring survey—specifically, their ethnicities, parents' marital statuses, and household incomes.<sup>12</sup> This is indeed a limitation of this survey and does not take into account that those from a lower income or single parent family may have different needs not represented in the survey.

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<sup>10</sup> For further reading, see: Gary D. Sandefur, Sara McLanahan, and Roger A. Wojtkiewicz, "The Effects of Parental Marital Status during Adolescence on High School Graduation," *Social Forces* 71, no. 1 (1992): 103-21, doi:10.2307/2579968, and Megan Ramsey, Abel Gitimu Waithaka, and Priscilla N. Gitmu, "Influence of Age and Parental Marital Status on Parent-Child Relationships: College Student Prospective," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>11</sup> For further reading, see: Jennifer March Augustine, "Maternal Education and the Unequal Significance of Family Structure for Children's Early Achievement," *Social Forces* 93, no. 2 (2014): 687-718, accessed November 24, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43287842>.

<sup>12</sup> Emma Garcia and Elaine Weiss, "Education inequalities at the school starting gate: Gaps, trends, and strategies to address them," Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, September 27, 2017, accessed November 24, 2018, <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/#epi-toc-23>.

### **Mentoring Experience based upon the Pre-Mentoring Survey**

Outlined below are the results from students participating in the survey regarding their leadership and mentoring experiences prior to the launch of this project's mentoring program in the local church:

1. Leadership Experience in College: 69.9% previously or currently hold a leadership position. Of this percentage, 83.1% had or currently have the opportunity for mentorship and 96.9% find this mentoring relationship helpful.
2. No Leadership Experience in College: 30.1% did not previously or do not currently hold a leadership position. An estimated 58.3% said opportunity for mentorship would influence a decision to assume a leadership role.
3. Church Involvement: Of the 85.2% currently involved in a church, 69% reported their church does not currently offer a mentoring or discipleship program. A striking 90.8% said they would be interested in mentorship if available at their church.
4. Mentoring Influence: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being most likely), 91.4% answered 7 or greater to the influence a mentoring relationship would impact continued volunteering and leadership within the local church.
5. Post-graduation: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being most likely), 87% answered 7 or greater that they would look for a local church that offered a mentoring program after graduation.
6. Age Demographic of the Mentors: 64% of students preferred a median adult 30 years or older as their first option, 47% preferred a young adult between 23-30 years old as their second option, and 51% preferred another college student as their third option.
7. Preferred Mentor Meeting Schedule: 63.1% preferred weekly and 22.3% preferred biweekly.
8. Mentoring Group Size: 55.8% said they would be open to meeting with a mentor alongside another peer while 23.5% would not be open to a group setting. 20.6% of those surveyed were indifferent.

These results of the pre-mentoring survey verify what literature previously discussed in this thesis-project presented, and the associated literature review found in Chapters 1-2 of this project. Additionally, the above results from the pre-mentoring survey proved helpful for two main areas of this project: the need for the mentoring process and the design of the curriculum and structure that would be implemented for this project. We will look at both of these areas separately below. The first area will utilize data from observations 1 through 5 listed above while the second area will utilize observations 6 through 8 from above.

### The Need for Mentoring

When looking at the data from points 1-5, there are several percentages that are encouraging with regards to a mentoring process within these two congregations actually leading to the retention and development of Millennials. The first set of percentages seems to validate the literature review which simply states Millennials have a high need and desire for mentoring. As one can see above, 69.9% of the students, according to the survey, previously or currently hold a leadership position. While that is a high percentage, the percentages that follow which indicate the presence of mentorship are even more telling: that 83.1% of this 69.9% have had or currently have the opportunity for mentorship, and 96.9% find this mentorship relationship helpful. While these percentages were expected to be high based on the research leading up to the project, however, to find that almost 100% found the mentoring relationship helpful shows that a mentoring program will benefit collegiate Millennials is congruent with speculations.

Explanations from the participants of this survey behind these data points permit these statistics to not just be numerical overviews, but experiential realities. Some of the responses given by the 96.9% who found mentorship helpful in high school provided responses such as, "The mentor showed me by example so that I could eventually take over the project myself," or "Our mentor gave us quite a bit of group time together before turning us loose to create and explore while coaching us along the way. I believe this helped me prepare for leadership in college."

While the above responses focus on those who had prior mentoring experience before college, it appears that those who gained access to mentoring while in college felt similarly about the impact of mentorship. For instance, one college student stated that, "The mentor's greatest asset to me was that he had been in my season of life before and had made it out. He could now show me the way." Another participant shared, "My mentor has helped me to learn, grow and receive criticism as it's warranted. She won't let me stay as I am but forces me to continue to pursue Christ which causes me to be more like Him. She can do this because she has the wisdom that someone my age just does not have yet." These statements show the value given to each of

the students in mentoring relationships both inside and outside the church. With a student percentage value toward mentoring as close to 100% as this survey reveals, it should only further encourage congregations to look at mentoring as a significant pathway to reach Millennials.

The second set of affirming percentages is found in observation two that, of those taking the pre-mentoring survey, 30.1% did not previously or currently do not hold a leadership position. Of this 30.1%, however, 58.3% answered that the opportunity for mentorship would have influenced their decision to assume a leadership role. When asked why a mentoring relationship would have positively influenced this decision, the participants' responses ranged from, "I feel I would have had support and training in my areas of weakness, thus giving me confidence to be the leader that I need to be," to "I believe a mentor is vital to a person's personal and spiritual growth as they can guide you along." While responses did acknowledge the spiritual and leadership benefits of mentoring, some responses also acknowledged that the presence of a mentor provides a safe place to process information. This was seen in one respondents' statement of, "It would just allow me to have someone to talk about issues that I can't talk to friends and family about."

Again, as congregations continue to search for a leadership development pipeline and to look at reaching younger adults and students, these percentages prove encouraging that over half of the 30.1% would consider a leadership position had they known mentoring was available for the purposes of spiritual growth, leadership development, and coaching. This is not unlike what was shown in the earlier biblical framework where the primary method through Scripture in which individuals are developed is, in fact, through a mentoring process. It should not seem coincidental, then, that mentorship appears to be hardwired within us, and mentorship is directly associated with increased likelihood of students assuming leadership responsibilities—especially within the local church.

A third set of percentages coming from the aforementioned data is given in observation three: this result shows that 85.2% of those who took the pre-mentoring survey indicated they were currently involved in a church, this number does not give an indication as to whether those



who took the pre-mentoring survey will remain involved in the local church, or their satisfaction in their serving capacity. What research has shown is they are dissatisfied and will soon leave as noted in the literature review.<sup>13</sup> This is why it is important to acknowledge that 69% of participants do not attend a church that currently offers a mentoring or discipleship program, but 90.8% stated they would be interested in it if their church offered. Here lies a significant solution for dissatisfied Millennials leaving the local church today.

In fact, it is important to understand some of the reasons provided by those 90.8% when asked the follow-up question, “Why would you be interested in a mentoring or discipleship program?” The reasons participants gave ranged from personal growth purposes such as, “I want to know I have someone in my corner who will love, encourage, and pray for me. I need someone to help keep me accountable and to help me grow in wisdom,” to wisdom from life experiences such as, “I’m in college and have a lot of obstacles but little experience. It would be nice to meet with someone with more life experience than myself and my friends.” Responses also indicated the desire for spiritual growth such as, “Religious mentorship is so important to maintaining your faith in college,” and “It gives me the opportunity to grow more in my faith by asking questions to someone who is further along in their walk. It also allows me to have a greater depth of connection to the church because this person would not be someone in my normal peer circle.” While these responses are helpful, we must also acknowledge the reality that not all who answered, “interested,” would actually commit to a mentorship program if offered. However, congregations must also acknowledge that an interest rate this high for a mentorship program seen in this sample could mean that a mentoring program could meet the desire or need expressed by collegiate Millennials in this sample.

Each of these percentages discussed help to provide substantial affirmation and encouragement for this thesis project and the potential impact it could make. Observations four

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<sup>13</sup> “5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to the Church,” accessed December 6, 2013, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/635-5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church#.UsI28Xk3-z2>.

and five help to further cement the reality that mentoring Millennials could potentially impact their retention in the local church. As observation four indicates, 91.4% perceive that mentoring would impact their continued volunteering and leadership within the local church. The data following from observation five affirms the values that this sample of Millennials holds in determining a local church. Of those who participated in the pre-mentoring survey, 87% indicated they would look for a local church that offered a mentoring program after graduation. Again, potential impact that this thesis project has unveiled on mentorship of college educated Millennials could have resounding impact on congregations and the ways in which they reach, and retain, the younger generation.

In these first five observations and their data points listed above, several conclusions can be drawn. One of the core takeaways, however, is that the data points to the positive impact that mentoring can have in college students' willingness to lead and serve. Such is the strength of this connectivity to mentorship within the local church that if given the opportunity after graduating college to continue a mentoring relationship at another church, 87% of those surveyed would look for a church that provides it.

With these percentages in mind, we can now look at how to best develop and design the context for successful, mentoring relationships within specific congregations. It is one thing to merely address the need Millennials have for mentoring relationships, but another to understand those needs and build a system in which those needs are effectively met within a mentoring relationship. This leads us to the second area of data collected in the pre-mentoring survey.

### Designing a Mentoring System

The final few questions of the pre-mentoring survey, noted in observations six through eight, provide the most help in the development of a mentoring program within the local church. This research assumes a congregation has established and recognized the need for a mentoring program. Therefore, it is on this basis that a close examination of observations six through eight will now assist the congregation in shaping the structure and design of a mentoring program.

For this thesis project, we utilized the information given in the pre-mentoring survey that 64% of those surveyed indicated the preferred age of a mentor is an adult who was 30+ years or older. This continues to affirm the known traits of Millennials explored in earlier chapters. While most Millennials surveyed prefer a middle-aged adult first, the second preferred age, with 47% of participants, for college student's mentor was a young adult between the ages of 23-30. It is with this data that the mentoring selection process for this thesis project required adult participants to be 25 years or older.

The second set of information gleaned from the pre-mentoring survey assisted in establishing not only the age of mentors, but also the frequency in which mentoring groups would meet and the size of these groups. With regards to frequency and size, the survey showed that 63.3% of students in this sample indicated a preference to meet weekly with their mentor. As such, this became an expectation communicated to qualifying mentors recruited for the testing of this thesis project. Additionally, because the pre-mentoring survey showed that only a little more than half of students (55.8%) were open to group mentoring, groups would be permitted to collectively decide whether they preferred to meet as a group or individually with their mentor.

Much was gained from the information received in the pre-mentoring survey. Even though some of the information could have been made based on underlying assumptions of denominational makeups, individual backgrounds of college students, and so forth, it is important to ensure any underlying assumptions were corrected by actual data collected in this survey. Secondly, the pre-mentoring survey helped set the initial framework for the mentoring project in such a way that college students could establish the groundwork of mentor qualifications, along with meeting frequency and size and communicate proper expectations to all involved. With the pre-mentoring survey in hand, it was easier to build the mentoring project around the expectations college students, primarily Millennials, had for a mentoring relationship. It is with this groundwork that the project was executed, and the results of the mentoring program will now be discussed in the following section.

### Results from Post-Mentoring Survey

There were 72 responses to the post-curriculum survey out of 100 total potential respondents.<sup>14</sup> The post mentoring survey was divided into two parts: a student section and a mentor section. While some questions were asked regardless of how the participants identified themselves, other evaluation questions were student- and mentor-specific. This section will review key attributes of both mentor and student feedback followed by notable findings from student surveys and mentor surveys when separated.

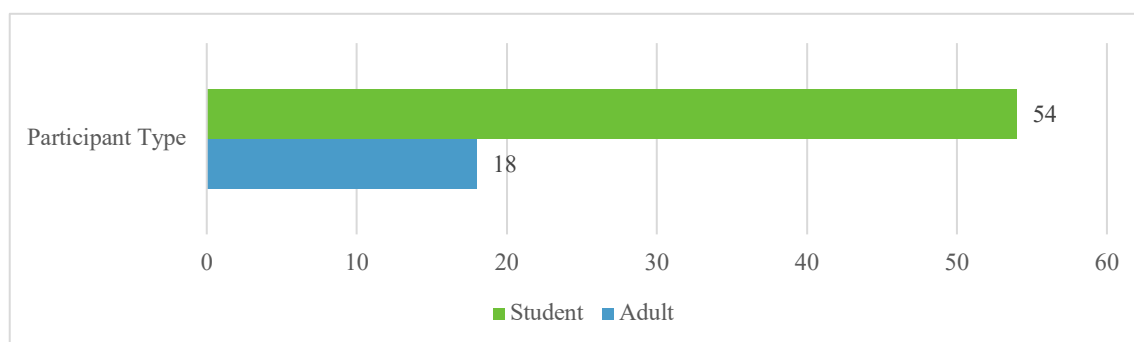
#### Combined Responses to the Post-Mentoring Survey

To begin, here are key attributes from the total sum of survey results received:

1. Participant: 75% were students and 25% were mentors.
2. Gender: 65.3% were female and 34.7% were male.
3. One-on-One or Group Meetings: 87.5% decided to meet in groups of one mentor and multiple students, and 12.5% met one-on-one.

Similar to the pre-mentoring survey not all questions required an answer. This means that some question categories will receive responses from all participants while others were optional. We can begin by looking at the breakdown of the student-mentor ratio of the 72 responses received. As indicated below, there were 54 students and 18 adults completed the Post-Mentoring survey.

Figure 3: Ratio of Student – Mentor Responses



<sup>14</sup> 72 people participated in the post-curriculum survey. The responders were not required to answer every question so there may be less than 72 total responses for certain questions in Appendix F.

The reason the sample size for this thesis project and Post-Curriculum survey is seventy-two is because the mentoring curriculum was executed and tested on students currently serving on the college leadership team at Calvary Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, AL. The reason there are fewer mentor responses than students in this survey is directly related to students preferring a group mentoring context instead of a one-on-one context. Therefore, there was not a need for as many mentors in order to execute this thesis project.

A second, observable statistic for this thesis-project is the gender breakdown of those who took the study as seen below:

Figure 4: Responses by Gender

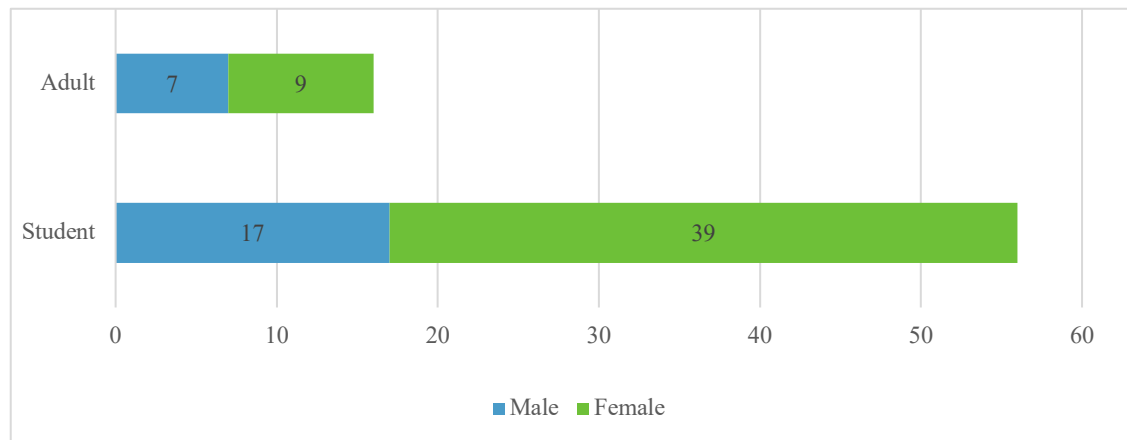
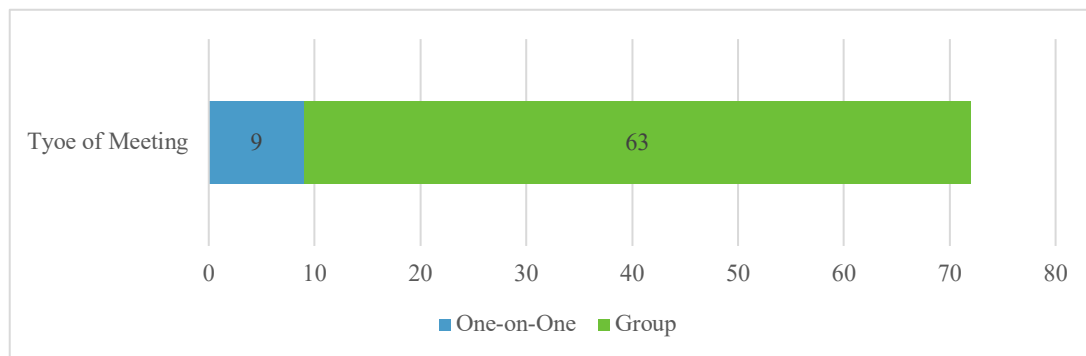


Figure 4 shows that more women filled out the post-mentoring survey than men. This should not come as a surprise based on the data and research received from the pre-mentoring survey that indicated more women who were involved in the setting of this project within the college ministry leadership team. We also intentionally limited the recruitment of female mentors in order to apply what was learned in the pre-mentoring survey: a little over half of students indicated they would prefer a group mentoring setting alongside peers and a mentor. However, as noted above, even in limiting the number of mentors recruited, we still allowed the students and the mentor mentors to decide if they preferred group mentoring or one-on-one mentoring.

This brings us to the third key attribute found within the collective portion of the post-mentoring surveys that conveyed which mentoring context students and mentors chose. Within this project, 87.5% of student and mentor participants chose to meet as a group while 12.5% chose to meet one-on-one. The actual number breakdown based on the 72 who filled out a post-mentoring survey is displayed below:

Figure 5: Mentoring Context



The percentage and number of students and mentors who chose a group format instead of a one-on-one format is significant because the mentor training provided resources for both contexts to permit mentors and students to decide their type of group. These percentages provide clarity to what students actually prefer when compared to the pre-mentoring survey where the student responses were seemingly inconclusive: 55.8% were open to meeting with a mentor alongside another peer, 23.5% were not open to a group setting, and 20.6% were indifferent. It appears that the 20.6% who were initially indifferent ended up valuing the group setting philosophy of mentorship instead of the one-on-one style. It will be helpful to continue observing these numbers to see if they remain steady in future studies. If the majority of preference is toward a group setting, the curriculum and resources provided could focus more on effective mentoring within a group context, while also allowing a more sustainable mentoring program that does not require as many mentors as there are students when launching, or maintaining, a mentoring program.

### Student Responses to the Post-Mentoring Survey

Next, responses of students reviewing their mentor mentoring relationship will be looked at in further detail:

1. Mentor Pairing: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely well), 94.5% of students rated their mentor pairing with a 7 or higher.
2. Student Pairing: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely well), 91.8% of students who were in a group rated their connections to the other students with a 7 or higher.
3. Growth: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely well), 93.3% of students rated the mentoring process as helpful for their spiritual/leadership growth with a 6 or higher.
4. Recommendation: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely likely), 88.4% of students rated they would recommend the mentoring process to other students with a 6 or higher.

There are several positives in the item categories listed above. The first two items will be addressed in tandem because of the significant role they play together in the success of a mentoring relationship. The hardest obstacle going into the project was the pairing process of students and mentors. How do we make two or more people who do not know each other, in different stages of life, with different life experiences and perspectives for the purposes of growing together spiritually? Initially, it seems that the one-on-one mentoring context at least limits the number of these variables, though post-survey indicated in actuality that group mentorship was more successful than we would have initially expected or assumed.

Some of the essentials to the 94.5% of students who rated the pairing with their mentor as a 7 or higher had a lot to do with assessing each students' choice of major and the mentors' current career fields, hobbies, along with utilizing personality testing such as Myers-Briggs to ensure personalities would be more compatible. These takeaways are supported in some of the statements made by students to further explain their rating for their mentor: One student stated, "My mentor and I have a lot in common and I feel like she's one of my friends. We have different stories, but we relate a lot. I like that we not only relate spiritually, but we have many of

the same interests in life too.” Another student stated, “My mentor and I have a lot in common which gave us a solid foundation for the mentoring process to build off of.”

Similarly, the students who were paired with each other and a mentor were seemingly successful. The post-survey indicated that 91.8% of students rated their connections to other students in the group with a seven or higher. Again, with this only being the initial launch of the mentoring program, the pairing of students was done primarily on their current area of study, hobbies, and personality types. However, some of the student’s responses when asked to explain their rating suggested that some groups also had prior friendship connection that played a large role in their high ratings. For instance, one student noted that, “I already had a friendship with the only girl in my mentoring group, and we can talk about Jesus all day long together.” Another student noted that, “The other student in my group has been going through a lot of the same things relationship- and spiritual-wise as me. The fact that we were friends and had known each other prior was a part of our good connection.” While these are just a few of the comments made based on prior friendships, it would be interesting in further study to see if the mentoring group provided a space for pre-existing friendships to increase or decrease in vulnerability. Regardless, at this point with the information received, it appears that students having a prior relationship further helped the mentor build onto their friendship, leading not only to a good mentor-student connection, but also good student-student connections.

The final two observations worth noting from the student responses in the post-mentoring survey (listed as 3 and 4) are of importance because the goal of the mentoring process is not only to connect students to an intergenerational church through meaningful relationships, but also challenge them spiritually and develop them as leaders for the future of the church. Therefore, the post-mentoring survey showing that 93.3% of students stated that their mentoring process was helpful for their spiritual and leadership growth with a rating of a six or higher, is highly encouraging. This percentage is higher than initially expected and suggests a positive role for intergenerational mentoring in developing Millennial leaders for the future of the church.



It was helpful to understand from the student perspective some of the reasons for this spiritual growth based on the comments made in the optional, explanation portion of the survey. For instance, one student hinted at the importance of community among Millennials, as she explained her rating in saying, "I have grown to involve other people in more aspects of my life and I think that has made my actions and words more intentional." Other students also commented on the positive impact of an older mentor had in their experience, such as one student who shared, "I have never had someone encourage and challenge me the way my mentor has. This year I have learned I have a lot of root issues that have led to my trust issue with the Lord." Another student described her mentor as, "Trustworthy and challenges [her] while still being loving and encouraging." One last comment made by a student in his explanation even noted how the mentoring process challenged him while also connecting him to the church by sharing, "My mentor really cares and challenges Tanner and I. He makes us feel loved and involved in the church."

Finally, it is also worth noting the high percentage of students who would recommend the mentoring process to other students. This 88.4% proves interesting because the student ratings for their connection to their mentors, the other students they were grouped with, and their spiritual and leadership growth were all in the ninety and above percentiles. This is not to imply this percentage is not something to be encouraged by, it is simply stating that, with the other categories rating 90% and higher there would be a natural expectation that this percentage would have also fallen within the ninety-percentile rating. It would be speculation as to why it is not higher, but one reason could possibly be the experience nature of a relationship. Just one collegiate Millennial had a positive experience does not necessarily indicate that he can tell peer that they will also have a positive experience. All in all, the student ratings and the percentages the data indicates from the student portion of the post-mentoring survey help cement the answer to the core question of this thesis-project: Could mentoring within congregations' aid in the retention of Millennials and grow them as leaders? It appears the answer is yes: Based upon the student reviews in this sample, a mentoring program that exists to grow and equip students in

their walks with Christ, to develop them as leaders, and to give them reason to recommend it to their friends may in fact be a plausible solution to retaining Millennials to become future leaders.

### Mentor Responses to the Post-Mentoring Survey

Now, it is important to examine key results found from mentor participants of the post-mentoring survey and their mentoring experience:

1. Mentor Pairing: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely well), 89.5% of the mentors rated the quality of their mentee pairing with a student (or students) with a 6 or higher.
2. Helpfulness of Curriculum: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely well), 94.5% of mentors rated the mentoring resource packet and training with a 6 or higher.

Both of the percentages collected from the mentor surveys help quantify the success of the mentoring resource packet and training. While 94.5% found the resources helpful, it is even more interesting that 89.5% of pairing success is almost identical to the 91.8% of students who also felt the pairing was successful. For the mentors, it appeared that the relationships with students seemed to start slower but, in the end, had the same positive outcome as the students.

The relational process and connectivity based on shared experiences was evidenced in several statements from the mentors when asked to explain their rating. One mentor stated, "Although they were both junior accounting majors who came from very different backgrounds, I was able to relate to both of them based on different seasons in my life. It was neat to see how I hopefully helped them this year while they also encouraged and loved me well." Another mentor noted, "Overall, I think we connected well. It took a little time, but the girls became more comfortable with each other and me. I think we all bought into the process and that made it easier." Again, it is important to see the relational element play out for both the student and the mentor. It would not be surprising to find that the student is more natural in the mentoring relationship initially as it is characteristic of their generation; however, it is encouraging to see

how the students shaped mentors who began to see value and worth in what they were doing—raising up the next generation of leaders.

A byproduct of this thesis-project was the development of a mentoring resource guide which proved quite helpful for 94.5% mentors as indicated in the post-survey. Most of the mentors, when asked to explain their rating, noted the packet gave them a crash course on mentoring. Though many still had questions that were not directly answered (and will be added for future mentoring packets), most mentors felt encouraged the packet existed and they did not have to enter into the mentoring relationship blindly. One mentor even mentioned, “It was the inclusion of the packet that was the tipping point for me deciding to be a part of the mentoring process. Sometimes the church comes up with an idea and just assumes we all know how to do it. The packet was a step-by-step process of how to go about leading a successful mentoring process.” Comments such as these offer encouragement and momentum for continuing to review, tailor, and modify the packet for its beneficiaries in future mentoring processes. Additionally, these statements should exhort all church leaders that vision must be followed by practical communication and equipping for the vision to move forward within the local church.

### **Project Conclusion**

The mentor and student mentoring program discussed in this chapter intends to continue with ongoing evaluation and adjustment as needed. Even with the encouraging and positive responses, there is still an increased need for additional training, proper accountability and monitoring throughout the year for both students and mentors, and what a successful expansion of this program would mean for its sustainability as the student demand will inevitably increase. Overall, it appears that a mentoring program not only benefits and satisfies the needs of Millennial college students, but also positively impacts the mentors involved. This program is just one, small step to each generation having a holistic, intergenerational view of the church body functioning together in unity.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

Ongoing monitoring, evaluating, and improvement is imperative for the maintenance and expansion of the mentoring program. Improved methodologies to train mentors directly impact the assimilation of Millennials into leadership positions within congregational life. While the correlation and feedback has been primarily positive thus far, it does not indicate that continual improvements are irrelevant. In fact, this thesis-project would suggest the contrary, as many variables, both positive and negative, emerged during its implementation. It is important to evaluate how this project answered the research questions it set out to answer in chapter one, key learnings that were gleaned from the project, considerations for future research, and some possible limitations in utilizing this research in other contexts.

#### **Reflection on Research Questions**

This project set out to study the effects of a mentoring program targeted at Millennials on their retention and leadership development within local congregations. In order to evaluate this thesis-project's outcome, the four research questions outlined in chapter one will be revisited and addressed briefly: How does the process of mentoring develop future leaders? What is the biblical and theological framework for mentoring in raising up of future leaders? What can be learned about the relationships between Millennials and the local church from precedent literature? Lastly, how can mentoring be used for discipling students through the use of mentors be done more effectively and faithfully?

How does the process of mentoring develop future leaders?

The process of developing future leaders begins primarily by relationship. This mentoring relationship can be put in place by an organization or be bound by agreement between two people, and it is a relationship in which one person, the mentor, trains the other, the mentee. The

actual act of the mentoring process sits at the cross-section of knowledge that the mentee has acquired through various teaching environments such as classrooms, workshops, and training seminars, and intersects with the practical usage of this knowledge or education in real world and real-life settings brought by the mentor. This is not to say that the mentee will have all the knowledge needed at the beginning of the mentoring relationship, nor does it imply that the mentor can completely teach the intersection of all knowledge and education that the mentee has obtained, but it is simply a process in which a more-experienced individual takes a less-experienced individual under their care for the purpose of teaching and training.

As we have seen through this project, the world is replete with mentoring relationships – corporate businesses use mentors to onramp new employees, to develop future leaders to replace aging leaders, or to integrate them into the culture and life of the company. However, we have also seen that the process of mentoring is not limited to the secular, corporate world. Christian organizations have used mentoring for making disciples, but in making disciples, they can also train them to become future leaders in congregations. This project utilized this methodology by taking a mentor from an older generation and assigning him or her to a college student in a mentoring relationship for the time span of one year and for the purpose of leadership and personal life investment. The hope and expectation of this relationship was that, in the end, this mentoring relationship would further integrate a collegiate student into the life and the leadership of a local church congregation. This mentoring process proved to be successful as the majority of the students involved not only continued to serve in leadership positions, but they also encouraged their peers to be involved in a similar mentoring relationship. This is how mentoring relationships develop future leaders. However, is this process theologically and biblically sound? Next the biblical and theological framework in raising up future leaders will be addressed.

## What is the biblical and theological framework for mentoring in raising up future leaders?

Christian scripture holds many examples of the mentoring within its pages. As defined above, the mentoring process is the action of taking knowledge and implementing it into practice within the boundaries of relationship. Mentoring can also be called discipleship; both fall under the umbrella of spiritual formation. Discipleship, in the most general sense, is the training of men and women in the ways Jesus would have them live. Discipleship, at its core, is much broader than mentoring. Mentoring, in many ways, narrows the scope of discipleship to focus on an investment of wisdom from an older adult to a younger adult.

With this definition of mentoring clarified, there are many instances of its practice in the Bible—from God to Abraham and Moses, Moses to Joshua, Jesus to the disciples, Barnabas to Paul, and Paul to Timothy and Titus—we see a pattern of relationships in which someone is moving from a known context to an unknown situation and the mentor guides the mentee. This guide allows the mentee to learn, understand, ask questions, and in the end, be able to take charge of the tasks at hand when the time came for the mentor to move on. This is at the heart and hope of mentorship: at the end of the mentoring process, the mentee is no longer designated as a mentee but is now a mentor that will take a mentee underneath their leadership.

Once the biblical model for mentorship was established, this project set out to find if a similar mentoring relationship of an older generation to a younger around the concept of life and leadership lessons could help in the retention of Millennials within a local congregation. As seen in the literature reviewed; Millennials desired to be mentored, not by a peer, but by someone who has walked the road ahead of them. And throughout this project, it became increasingly clear that the background research proved true, Millennials desired to be integrated not only into leadership process but also into mentoring relationships with members from older generations; students most often requested mentors who were over thirty years of age. While collegiate Millennials were requesting an adult over thirty, the indication was not to say this mentor may have more biblical knowledge than a peer or someone who is younger, but instead, simply what a collegiate

Millennial was looking for was the life-experience that the mentor was bringing to the table. This applied to many areas, but especially to the area of leadership within congregations as college students learned to navigate situations and arenas more quickly because they were able to have a dialogue with their mentor. The integration of generations within the local church can be problematic, but it is also necessary. This is further discussed in the next research question.

What can be learned about the relationship between Millennials  
and the local church from precedent literature?

This question is broad; there is much we can learn about the relationship between Millennials and the local church from current literature. However, the intent of this research question was to show a primary issue facing local congregations in the United States, chiefly, that Millennials were, by and large, leaving or not joining local congregations like generations in the past. In reviewing the literature on this subject, the hope was to understand characteristics of the Millennial generation while also looking for avenues or mechanisms in which local congregations could potentially gain traction in keeping and or engaging Millennials in local congregations.

While Millennials exhibit many different traits, two primary ones were seen repeatedly in literature: they have a desire to lead and bring about change in the world, and they desire to be mentored in the areas of life and work. These traits are listed as primary, not because other traits of this generation are deemed “less valuable,” but because these two traits were identified as areas local congregations could potentially utilize to engage and/or re-engage Millennials. First, local congregations should be familiar with discipleship, or mentoring, as it is a cornerstone of what Christ has called us to do, and second, local congregations, like any other organization that exists over multiple generations, have a continual need to develop leaders for the future. Therefore, local congregations could engage Millennials by mentoring and training them up to lead in various areas of the church.

After studying the characteristics of Millennials and finding a potential mechanism for local congregations to engage them, the use of precedent literature shifted from simply understanding the Millennial generation to understanding various avenues in which effective mentoring has taken place within local congregations. This involved looking at various mentoring models which were proven effective for a variety of congregations in the past. It involved looking into literature that outlined various mentoring programs that were currently engaging Millennials, both in the workplace and in religious contexts. Lastly, it involved looking at literature that made the case for how mentoring was used for effective leadership development and the processes needed and utilized for it to prove effective.

Precedent literature formed the foundation by which this project moved forward. Without an understanding of Millennials, without identifying traits by which local congregations could engage this demographic, and without understanding the various systems and process that of mentoring that have been effectively utilized to shape Millennials as leaders – this project would have been a shot in the dark. However, with information gleaned from precedent literature, a solid foundation was laid for this project to take place. With this new-found understanding from current literature, the final research question, “How can mentoring be used for students through the use of mentors to shape future leaders?” can be examined.

How can mentoring be used for discipling students through the use  
of mentors more effectively and faithfully?

If mentorship was being used as the primary mechanism for building future church leaders in local congregations and yet literature said that Millennials were leaving the church, then a disconnect is occurring somewhere. Thus, this project began to look at what was taking place within the mentoring process and examining how could it be done more effectively and faithfully. This gap formed the basis to ensure that an adequate review process was taking place during the project; again, if mentoring was already a part of the church, then what was missing? Therefore, to answer this question, this project spent time surveying collegiate Millennials and



asking what they were looking and hoping for in a mentoring relationship. It also spent time with mentors from older generations to help them see mentoring as not just about teaching a passage of scripture, but also sharing life-lessons in practical ways and how their understanding of Scripture shaped their daily lives. One would think that the shift from simply teaching a passage to life-application of that same passage would not be that big of a leap, but the opposite proved to be true and was a core finding in this project. In both congregations utilized for this project, it took significant time to retrain older generations as to what exactly mentoring relationships were meant to be: primarily, the passing on of life lessons and practical advice through a Christian worldview, and less about the in-depth study of a Scripture passage.

The post-mentoring review played a pivotal role in evaluating the effectiveness and faithfulness of the project. It was given to see if the project actually understood the needs of the collegiate Millennials who were involved and whether adequate training was given to the mentors. In the end, the review showed that the college students did indeed value mentoring and wanted to continue the process with their adult mentors and would also recommend it to their peers. An unexpected outcome of the project was the amount of positive feedback given from adults. The training process built for this project actually freed them from unrealistic expectations they had in their minds when they heard the words, “discipleship” or “mentoring.” It helped them to understand that it was a relationship in which they were simply sharing knowledge, mistakes, and practical advice on how to lead and serve the local church. With this information from the post-mentoring review, we will now take a look at some key learnings that have come from this project.

### **Key Learnings**

Although a project such as this should provide details and data to support the initial predictions and materialize ideas, it can also produce findings that could potentially merit future research. This reality proved true and some of the key findings from this project were predicted and while others were unexpected. The key learnings from this project were: a mentoring

program did tie collegiate Millennials back into the local congregation, the response of adults was positive-but more importantly their hope for the generation coming up behind them shifted from negative to hopeful, students were committed to fulfilling the requirements of the mentoring project, and lastly, collegiate Millennials who graduated from the mentoring program seemed more able to connect with another local congregation and make connections outside of their generational cohort. Each of these learnings will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first key learning, and one in which this project set out to hopefully achieve, was that, based upon this project, a mentoring program geared towards collegiate Millennials does in fact tie them back to the local congregation. This project spanned two separate congregations and universities, and in both locations, the findings from the post-mentoring review indicated that the college mentees involved in the mentoring project remained committed to the local congregation in which they started the mentoring program. Because there is a tendency among college students to never fully commit to one church during their collegiate career, but to try one for a season and then end up at another, the commitment of those involved with the mentoring program was significant. Not only did the college students involved in the mentoring program stay involved within the local congregation, they also continued to lead in various ministries within the congregation. The students continued to serve in the college ministry in which they were involved, and what was also found is that some college students began to serve in areas of leadership in which their mentor was also involved. This diversification of service helped to recruit more adults from older generational cohorts as they began to see more and more college students involved church-wide.

A second key learning, one which was unexpected, was the positive response from the mentors involved with the mentorship program. Initially the majority of adults from older generational cohorts had an ambivalent, if not negative, attitude towards the Millennial generation as a whole. However, after reading the post-mentoring review, it became apparent that the mentors actually began to see the strengths of Millennials that were discussed in earlier chapters – most notably their eagerness to learn and to seek advice and wisdom from the adults,

along with their optimism for life, and their desire to make a difference in the world. Upon the mentors identifying these qualities, the mentors' attitudes toward the Millennial generation shifted, and as a side-effect, the congregation as a whole was strengthened as they were more open to collegiate Millennials who bring new ideas, thoughts, and systems to the table in how to do various things in ministry. The mentoring project not only helped reach and retain Millennials, but by allowing Millennials to be involved with leadership opportunities, they in turn began to shape the way the church was meeting the needs of the generation behind them, Generation "Z." The positive experience that mentors had with the program will hopefully have a lasting effect that adapts and reaches future generations.

A third key learning was that the expectations set for the students who entered the mentoring program were met. Initially, this was an area of concern as there is no way to "grade" a student on their participation and they could decide not to be involved in the process at any time. Although the commitment to meet weekly with a mentor was stressed as well as emphasizing the importance of the time that the mentor is setting aside and not taking their meeting for granted, but showing up, participating, and being involved in discussions, it was still unclear at the onset if the mentees would fulfill their end of the requirements. Based on the post-mentoring survey and feedback from mentors, the students, at times, were more faithful than their mentors at keeping the scheduled times and being prepared for each meeting. Although some of the mentoring meetings took place as early as 5:30 am and as late as 10:00 pm, based on the mentor's availability, the students showed up. Students do not often lobby for appointments at 5:30 am, but this project suggests that if that is the time the mentor has available, the student will make the time for the mentoring meeting. This finding supports the literature's statement that Millennials have a high desire for mentoring relationships and will pursue them.

The last key learning is that the data from reviews suggests that collegiate Millennials who graduated from the mentoring program seem more able to connect with another local congregation and make connections outside of their generational cohort within a new congregation. This learning requires more study, but the hope of this project was to engage

Millennials in local congregations and develop them into leaders through mentoring. However, if the student does not re-engage in a new congregation when they relocate after college, then the effort of this program is not entirely fruitful. What the data suggests is that the students graduating are actually looking for congregations in which they can continue the mentoring process – both in being mentored and at the same time having the opportunity to mentor someone of a younger generation. This brings great joy to the researcher, as it shows that the mentoring program was facilitating mentoring relationships similar to those seen throughout Scripture where one mentor takes on a mentee for the purpose of that mentee becoming a future mentor. Although it needs further research, this scenario is seemingly taking place.

Each of these key learnings played a significant role in motivating the researcher to continue to refine and increase the size of the mentoring program. The learnings also helped two separate congregations begin to see how college students are not simply a transient demographic but are people who can in fact help serve, lead, and bring about the changes needed to continue to reach their peers and the generations behind them-thereby maintaining a consistent leadership pipeline for the future of the church. These learnings also suggest potential ways in which congregations can move from silo generational ministries to more intergenerational models. Although there is nothing wrong in sharing life with those in the same generational cohort, the interaction of diverse ages in both congregations served to train new leaders as well as encourage and excite older generations about the future of the local congregation. While the key learnings are largely positive, this is not to say that this project is without limitations or specific areas of utilization-both of which will be examined in the next section.

### **Limitations**

A primary limitation is this study's scope is only regional rather than national. The research used for this project was set within the context of the non-denominational and Southern Baptist evangelical communities in the American South. There are unique aspects of southern culture that may not apply or transfer directly to other areas of the United States or Canada. Any

implementation of this study to the United States or Canada at large would require contextualization for significant differences such as language, culture, and demographic background.

A second limitation is that findings of the research for this thesis-project centered on Millennials. This means that the focus for a mentoring program and its intention, development, application, and retention is for the purposes of investing in Millennials as future church leaders. While similarities can be drawn between generations, this study's results did not involve any measurements, such as leadership development for other generations outside of Millennials. Other generations, such as the Gen Z or Generation X, have their own distinctives and would require varied adjustments and customized resources that meet the assessed needs of another generation. Additionally, the implementation of this mentoring program is within a specific congregation, making its results even more localized not only to a specific region, but also to a specific church. Without further testing, there is no way to ensure this exact project model will work as successfully within another regional or congregational context without proper study and evaluation for necessary adaptations of the program and its resources.

A third limitation is that qualitative results breed restrictions inherently. Qualitative results are limited by the type of questions asked, the amount of questions asked, and the extent of research done. This thesis-project focused on retaining Millennials within the local church through the implementation and evaluation of a mentoring program that would propel them into continued, church leadership opportunities. Therefore, this project is not intended to make determinative conclusions about mentoring or Millennials, but rather to serve as a case study for applications within similar or variable contexts with adjustments where deemed necessary.

Lastly, every researcher has their own built in limitations. This can be personal biases, various worldviews, and desire to make the data work for the claim that they are making. Therefore, it cannot go without mentioning here that the researcher of this project is human, and thereby flawed. It is also worth mentioning that this researcher's context changed during the implementation of this project. While this can prove beneficial in that the mentoring project was

tested in two different congregations with students at two different universities, it can also prove to be a limitation. There are different sets of data to draw from, increased difficulty in the ability to follow-up with mentors and mentees from the previous congregation on results given, and the inherent struggle of implementing a new process or element of change while early in a new job at a different congregation.

The reality is that no leadership program is ever complete, and no mentoring of Christ-likeness ever reaches its full conclusion in this lifetime. All of the components utilized to institute a mentoring program for Millennials as described up to this point are simply the beginning steps of a lifelong process-- not just for Millennials, but for the church at large as it continues to understand the mentoring needs of future generations.

### **The Need for Ongoing Improvement**

As with all programs, continual evaluation and revision is necessary. With the mentoring guide, there is still uncertainty if freedom to choose meeting curriculum is helpful or hindering to mentoring group success. At the same time, it is unknown how to pair the most suitable mentor with the student(s) they will meet with. It was assumed that previous experience, similar hobbies, or interests in career fields provided a good, general starting point for pairing. However, this needs more study and testing.

Although the majority of reactions to the mentoring program have been positive, as reflected in both student and mentor responses to the mentoring program, ensuring adequate training and expertise for all mentors is vital to the effectiveness of mentoring. Experience suggests there are innumerable holes in development and training that cause variations of successes and failures across the span of the mentoring relationship program. There will need to be additional research and discussion for training methodologies, along with a stronger system for ongoing monitoring and accountability for mentors to lead effectively.

Similarly, a system to gauge where a student is in their knowledge and application of their walk with Christ must be enacted. There is also no current way to assess their leadership

capabilities pre-mentoring relationship in order to measure growth, improvement, or realization (and growth) of giftedness over the course of the mentoring program. Additional research for gathering these metrics may need to be done: Are there ways to test for these things pre- and post-mentoring? Is this helpful information to have? How do you balance the results of a test with inherent value in Christ? Each of these questions would need to be further studied.

### **Considerations for Future Research**

This entire thesis-project touches briefly on a number of mentoring areas and needs. The study spanned two different college campuses, several southern states, and two denominations. Therefore, this leaves us with a wide range of considerations for future research. A number of future research areas to investigate are briefly discussed below.

#### **Effectiveness of a One-Year Mentoring Relationship**

The nature of this thesis-project obtained data based on a single year of mentoring between mentors and students. It would be interesting to analyze responses to the mentoring program from each side's perspective over the course of several, consecutive years and if the ratings would increase or decrease with time. For instance, if a freshman joined a mentoring program and was able to maintain the mentor relationship throughout his or her entire college career, would it have a greater mentoring impact in the students spiritual and leadership growth than having that student re-paired each year with a new mentor?

#### **Millennials Serving Post-Graduation**

This mentoring thesis-project focused, and demonstrated, the desire of Millennial students for mentoring. It has shown positive feedback from both student and mentors has also showed an increased retention and level of involvement within the local church during the college years. However, will this translate to the same Millennials continuing to participate within a local church post-college graduation? It would be interesting to study the correlation of

the mentoring relationship in post-college church involvement compared to a Millennial who was active in a church during college without a mentoring relationship.

### Millennials Who Choose Not to Attend College

The data utilized for this project was gathered from Millennials who were currently attending college; however, the literature reviewed and the biblical and theological framework for mentoring was not based solely on collegiate Millennials. With these things in mind, one cannot deny that there are differences between Millennials who attend college and those who do not. Whether or not these differences impact the mentoring process and its outcomes cannot be known until adequate testing is done with a set of Millennials who did not attend college or who are currently college-aged but are not attending college.

### Millennials, Ethnicity, and Mentoring

As the data for this project indicates, the primary respondents in this study were white college students. There should be further research done on how mentoring can affect congregations of different ethnicity and how mentoring could affect congregations seeking to become more ethnically diverse. As indicated by the literature reviewed, the Millennial generation is the most diverse generation when compared to previous generational cohorts. This fact suggests that research needs to be done on the effects of mentoring within different ethnicities and also exploring how a mentoring program could be set up to meet the needs of changing demographics within the culture of the United States at large.

### Mentoring's Effect on Other Generations

There is clear hope that a mentoring relationship between an older mentor to a Millennial, college student increases the Millennial's engagement within the local church. What results would appear if this test was continued across other generational lines? As noted in the Biblical Framework section, the essence of biblical mentoring and discipleship is the passing down of wisdom, skill, and knowledge from one generation to the next. Therefore, it seems the Bible



would suggest a correlative effect similar to that of the Millennials if a mentoring process was created for other generations. This further suggests collegiate Millennials could invest into Generation Y high schoolers who could in turn invest into Generation Z children. Cross-generational research would yield interesting results and implications for the local church and its ministry models.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The deepest desire of my heart and the reverberating call God places within me is the need for ongoing discipleship, from one generation to the next. Determining how I, as a college pastor, can effectively invest into a limited, yet pivotal, period of a person's life in order to help them grasp the concept of living on mission with Jesus Christ is of utmost importance. Even more than that, as a college pastor, I have the unique opportunity to send students, upon their graduation, to congregations all over the world. At the core of this thesis-project, was a deep desire to discover if a mentoring process can re-engage Millennials to lead and serve within the context of the local church.

In the end, we know that Millennials are leaving the church. We know that Millennials desire mentoring relationships. We know that the Bible places emphasis on intergenerational mentoring. Therefore, this project is just one test case used to determine if a return to basic, intergenerational mentoring principles would re-engage Millennials. Based upon this small study, it appears it will. This leaves me, as the author, very hopeful.

The thought of re-engaging the largest, most educated and optimistic generation ever to walk the planet through mentoring should bring nothing but excitement for the local church. Strategically mentoring this generation in such a way that sends them out from collegiate ministries to cities and countries all over the world with a deep knowledge of the Gospel is a matter of importance and stewardship. In the midst of significant hours dedicated to research, careful planning and attention to detail, while navigating the unforeseen occurrences of life, I am still left with a sense of joy and anticipation of the work that God is calling me to do. God is at

work and he is doing great things in this generation and those to come. He is raising up many who will be agents of change throughout the world. May congregations like the one I serve be faithful stewards to those they have been entrusted with by modeling the way in which they should go.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **COLLEGE STUDENT SEMI-STRUCTURED SURVEY**

#### **College Student Survey**

The primary goal of this questionnaire is to gather information on college students and their reactions and thoughts on various methods and types of mentoring.

Below you will find a series of standardized questions which will help in deciphering how mentorship is affected by race, economic status, and general background. There will also be a series of unstructured questions in which based upon your response to a question, more information may be requested based upon your response to the original query.

This survey is being conducted to research the viability of an adult mentoring program as part of completion of my Doctor of Ministry studies. Your honest answers are going to help guide the formation of this adult mentoring process and its continued development. Your information will be used in my thesis-project, but all information will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Thanks again for your honest feedback.

#### **Survey Consent**

1. Would you like to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes

☐ No

#### **Background Information**

1. **Gender:**

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ No Response

2. **In what year were you born:**

3. **Ethnicity:**

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ White

☐ Other

☐ No Response

**4. Growing up (up to high school graduation), were your parents...**

☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Divorced and remarried

☐ No Response

**5. Which category below would describe the household income level in which you grew up?**

☐ Less than 30,000

☐ 30,000 - 75,000

☐ 75,000 - 150,000

☐ 150,000+

☐ No Response

**6. What year in college are you?**

☐ Freshman

☐ Sophomore

☐ Junior

☐ Senior

☐ Grad Student

**7. Did you attend college in the same state you would consider “home”?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**8. If you answered “no,” what would you consider your home state to be?**

**9. Which college did you attend?**

- ☐ The University of Oklahoma
- ☐ The University of Alabama
- ☐ Other

**10. When did you begin attending church?**

- ☐ I haven't started attending
- ☐ Pre-College
- ☐ College
- ☐ No Response

**11. Are you currently attending church?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No Response

**Leadership Background****1. Were you involved in any leadership positions before college?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**1. If yes, what were some of the leadership positions in which you served prior to college?**

**2. If yes, what led you to be involved in these leadership position(s)?**

**3. If yes, where you mentored / developed in any way during your leadership opportunity(s)?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**1. If yes, do you think this mentoring / development relationship was helpful?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**1. If yes, what are some things you gained from this mentoring / development program?**

**2. If no, what were some of the reasons you think the mentoring / development program proved unhelpful?**

**4. If no, would you have been interested in a mentoring / development program?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**2. Have you been involved in any leadership positions while in college?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**1. If yes, what led you to be involved in these leadership position(s)?**

**2. If yes, what were some of the leadership positions in which you served while in college?**

**3. If yes, were you mentored / developed in any way during your leadership opportunity(s) while in college?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**1. If yes, do you think this mentoring / development relationship is/was helpful?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**1. If yes, what are some things you gained from this mentoring / development program?**

**2. If no, what were some of the reasons you think the mentoring / development program proved unhelpful?**

**4. If no, would you have been interested in a mentoring / development program?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. If no, if you had known an organization provided a mentoring / development program to those in leadership, would it have impacted your decision to serve in a leadership position?

☐ Yes

☐ No

1. If yes, why would it have impacted your decision?

### **Mentoring / Development Preferences**

1. Are you currently involved in a church?

☐ Yes

☐ No

1. If yes, what church do you currently attend?

☐ Wildwood

☐ Calvary

☐ Other

2. If yes, does your church currently offer a mentoring / discipleship program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. If yes, what does your churches current mentoring / discipleship program look like?

4. If no, would you be interested in a mentoring relationship if your church offered it?

☐ Yes

☐ No

1. If yes, why would you be interested in a mentoring relationship?

- 2. If yes, what age demographic would you like your mentor to be in?  
(Please rank in order of your preference (1) being the most desired (3) being the least)**

- ☐ Another college student
- ☐ Young Adult (grad student or 23-30)
- ☐ An older adult (30+)
- ☐ Indifferent

- 3. If yes, how often would your preferred mentor relationship meet?**

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Bi-Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Indifferent

- 4. If yes, would you be open to having one or more peers participate with you in the mentoring / discipleship relationship in addition to the mentor?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Indifferent

- 5. If yes, what are some things you would like for the mentoring relationship to include (think life lesson, bible study, book study, etc)**

- 5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much influence do you think your mentoring / discipleship relationship would play in your decision to volunteer / lead in your local church? ? (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you will look for a church that offers a mentoring program after you graduate from college? (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----



**APPENDIX B**  
**MENTORSHIP GUIDE**



# **Mentorship Guide**

“Think of me as a fellow patient in the same hospital who, having been admitted a little earlier, could give some advice.”

C.S. Lewis

## Why we do mentoring

Mentoring is one of the most meaningful, purposeful, life-giving things that is a privilege to be a part of as a Christ-follower. We believe that it is the plan for expanding God's kingdom here on earth. We see this modeled in the life of Jesus and commanded after his resurrection. We believe that true Christian growth and sanctification happens in the context of gospel-centered intentional community. We come together that we might learn how to love and serve God better and how to love and serve others better. Through small, committed groups of believers we strive to encourage one another, hold each other accountable, and spur one another on to growth in Christ through both invitation and challenge. Mentoring is more than a weekly one-hour meeting: Mentoring is life together, accountability, growth, teaching, training, encouragement, and correction in the life/lives of fellow believers. Mentoring is not up to us. It is Christ's work by Him, to Him, and for Him! His grace allows us to be a part of the work in the lives of others.

**1 Thessalonians 2:8** “Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”

**2 Timothy 2:2** “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”

**1 Corinthians 11:1** “And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”

**Matthew 28:18-20** “Jesus came and told His Mentored, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make Mentored of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new Mentored to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

## What is this packet for?

We hope these resources encourage you, excite you, and inspire you to be available for the Lord to use you — your time, your willingness, your journey with Him — to be a part of His work in the lives of His people. We believe in you, and Christ in you— who will equip you for every good work.<sup>[P]  
[SEP]</sup>

## **What's Inside**

- Expectations & Values of You: the Mentor
- Expectations & Values of Students: the Mentored
- Four Habits of a Discipling Leader
- Components of a Mentoring Meeting
- Deciding on Topics to Study
- Study Topic Ideas
- The Meeting Location
- How to Prep
- Handling Traumatic Life Circumstances
- Coaching Questions
- Get to Really Know You Questions
- Reflection Questions for Scripture
- Handling Discussion Problems
- The Multiplication Process of Mentoring
- Connecting Outside of Your Meeting
- Time Group Mentoring
- Resources for You
- Key Concepts from the Huddle Model

## Expectations & Values of You: the Mentor

Spiritual leadership requires different qualifications than does leadership in the marketplace. We can turn to God's Word to help us define and understand these differences.

**1 Timothy 3:1** "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer (leader), it is a fine work he desires to do."

**John 15:5** "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

**Perfection is not a requirement.** If it were, none of us could disciple other believers. The following are 10 areas to keep your heart, lifestyle, and attitudes in check and growing as a Mentor.

- You are being discipled.
- You have a growing understanding of the Gospel of Jesus and how it relates, effects, and affects every area of life.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- You are coming prepared.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- You are faithful to your student(s) and your commitment.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- You are honest, trustworthy and maintain confidentiality.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- You have hard and pointed conversations, and you ask hard questions with love and grace.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- You have an active, growing relationship with Jesus in word and in action.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- You live above reproach.
- You exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit.
- You care deeply about others - you have a heart to see people grow in their relationship with Jesus.<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

## **Expectations & Values of Students: the Mentored**

### **Faithful**

When life gets crazy, tests and papers are piling up, and the stress is high... your time together is not the first thing to go. Be honest and upfront from the beginning that you expect them to make this a priority. Don't waste your time on the uncommitted.

### **Available**

They may be physically available, but are they spiritually, mentally, and emotionally available for your time together in God's word and to receive training and correction as it applies to their life?

### **Teachable**

Some students are defensive, they make excuses, lack humility, or feel they already have it all figured out. If a student is responding to God's word you are trying to share with them with, "I know that already," "I've heard that before," or "I do that already" they probably struggle in this area. Confront them about this character issue you see in their life.

### **Introspection**

Introspection leads to change as we become more self-aware of our propensities in speech, action, thought and motive. Time in God's word should move us to stare deeply into ourselves and self-evaluate.

### **Honesty & Trust**

Communicate often that you love and value your student, and you desire for them to follow Jesus. Honesty and trust are two of the key foundations for any effective relationship, but especially a mentoring relationship. When you have to do and say hard things, your student will know you are for them despite the painful "rub."

### **Preparedness**

The student is coming (on time) ready and prepared to listen, respond, and apply God's word and truths to their life. They have a desire and readiness to grow and examine areas of their life that need to grow in spiritual maturity.

### **Multiplication**

As your Mentor invests in you, there should be a move toward the time when the one being discipled begins to reproduce this process with someone they want to intentionally invest in.

## **Four Habits of a Discipling Leader**

### **Create Safety**

Your disciple must feel safe if / when they admit a mistake, expose a sin issue in their life, or any other number of sensitive topics. You must go first in this arena of vulnerability. This does not mean you need to expose every last detail of your life, but find ways to wisely and faithfully affirm the environment is safe and free of judgment.

### **Embrace Mistakes**

Ultimately, we are ALL Mentored of Christ — He alone is the essence of perfection and who we are ultimately called to look at. In reminding your disciple (and yourself) of this reality often gives freedom to admit error and imperfection. There will be times when words are not chosen wisely, something is misunderstood, or something just didn't come across quite right. That is okay. Admit mistakes willingly and freely.

### **Check your Emotions**

Do not allow your emotions to take over and inhibit clear and wise thinking / responses in the heat of a moment. Remember, God has given us our emotions as good things, but the way we use them can lead us to sin. Christ modeled perfectly how we can be angry (or sad, worried, hurt, etc.) and not fall into sin.

### **Talk Less & Act More**

Instead of talking over and over about the same struggles, mistakes, or errors try to rethink your actions and correct behavior to create a new outcome. <sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## Components of a Mentoring Meeting

The crucial point in planning your mentoring time is to wisely structure each element to help meet the needs of your student(s), and **ALWAYS** follow the Spirit's leading — even if it's in a direction that you weren't planning on. This is meant to be a framework to work within to help make the best use of time.

### 1) Small Talk (15-20 minutes)<sup>[1][SEP]</sup>

This is the relationship-building time. Ask to get to know you questions (there's some in this packet!). **Never underestimate the importance of ensuring comfort to be themselves!**

**Watch out!** Small talk can run long. If you don't watch it, your time will be one, not-so-small talk. This isn't all bad at times, but if it's perpetually happening, it communicates you don't value time in God's word and its application to life.

### 2) Quality time in God's Word (20 minutes)<sup>[1][SEP]</sup>

Interaction with the Word is central. Ask questions, share stories/struggles, and dig deep. Include examples from your own life (it keeps you human and reminds them you're not a life expert). However, don't make it all about you. This time is about them and Jesus.

**Ask this question at the end:** What does this mean for us? What from anything that we've looked at or talked about today can you apply this week? Be sure to write down what they say, and follow up with them the following week.

### 3) Accountability / Prayer (15-20 minutes)<sup>[1][SEP]</sup>

Ask your student(s) how things are going in areas of their life they've asked you to come alongside in. Ask how goals they've set are going. Follow up on things they said they were going to do/needed to do. Ask hard questions, have hard conversations, and be full of grace in your pointedness. Spend time praying. As you grow together, prayer increases in importance.

## Deciding on a Topic to Study

### Pray

Pray for insight and wisdom. Ask God for sensitivity to the needs of your student(s).

### Observe

Begin by observing as much as you can about your student(s). You can learn plenty from just watching their actions.

- Are they comfortable talking about being a Christian?
- What do you observe about their relationships with Christians and non-Christians? Their roommates?
- How do they interact with others? Are they shy? Outgoing? Overbearing? Controlling?
- Are they involved at Calvary? A campus ministry?
- What can you observe about their walk with the Lord?
- Do they seem hesitant to be involved in a mentoring relationship? If so, why?

### Ask

Your observations aren't always as helpful and accurate as what you can learn directly from students. So, ask a few informal questions like:

- Why do you have an interest in being discipled?
- Have you ever been involved in a mentoring relationship? What was it like? What is your spiritual background?
- What would you like to get out of this mentoring time?<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

### Survey

Choose questions that are appropriate for your student(s) and indicate that you will use their answers to help in your planning. Hand out 3x5 cards and let them jot down their input. Some questions you might ask:

- If asked to describe my relationship with the Lord at the present, I would use these adjectives:
- When I struggle in my relationship with the Lord it is generally in these areas:
- If I could have one question answered about how to live the Christian life, it would be...
- An area of my life I know I need to grow in, that I'm putting off, that would have a huge benefit is...
- The one thing I would like to get out of this time is...



## Respond

Based on your observations, asking, and even the survey, you can ask yourself these types of questions as you think through the spiritual maturity of your student(s) / potential topics to study this semester/year.

- Do they understand and apply the basics of the Christian life (assurance of salvation, dealing with sin, etc.)?
- Do they understand their identity Christ or do they continue living as their “old selves”?
- Do they understand the roles of each part of the Trinity?
- Do they know how to hear from God?
- Do they understand the power and purpose of prayer, and are they comfortable doing it regularly?
- Do they struggle with managing their goals, time, priorities, and commitments?
- Do they see themselves as having potential, worth, and significance for the Kingdom?
- Are there any fears or insecurities that seem to be crippling or hindering their walk with Christ and His call on their life?
- Do they take the initiative to study God’s Word and actively grow in Christ or are they dependent on someone else to motivate them spiritually?
- Which character and conduct issues need attention (gossip, moral standards, thought life, integrity, etc.)?
- What are their daily concerns and struggles (studying, finances, relationships, family concerns, etc.)?
- Do they have a growing concern for those who don’t know Christ?
- Do they know how to share the gospel with non-Christians?
- What growth would you like to see in their lives? What would tell you they are growing in their relationship with the Lord?
- How can you help them develop consistent, personal time in God’s Word and in prayer?
- What steps would you like to see them take to reach out to others? Prepare their testimony, invite someone to a weekly meeting, or learn how to share their faith.
- How will their lives be different if they consistently surrender areas of their lives to Christ (studies, finances, relationships, family, etc.)?

## Study Topic Ideas

- Assurance of Salvation
- Quiet Time
- Prayer
- Priorities / Time Management
- Evangelism
- Spiritual Gifts / Personality
- Leadership Development
- Identity in Christ
- Renewing your mind (scripture memory, recognizing lies)
- Victory over sin / combating temptation
- Your personal testimony
- Anxiety, Worry, Depression
- Faith vs. Works
- Love
- The Tongue
- Knowing God's Will
- Obeying God's Word
- Assurance of Forgiveness
- Giving to the Lord: Time, Talents, and Treasure

### Main themes of the books of the Bible:<sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

#### Old Testament

Genesis – Beginning

Exodus - Deliverance

Leviticus – Instruction

Numbers – Journeys

Deuteronomy – Obedience

Joshua - Conquest

Judges - Deterioration and Deliverance

Ruth – Redemption

1 Samuel – Transition

2 Samuel – Unification

1 Kings – Disruption

2 Kings – Dispersion

1 Chronicles - Israel's Spiritual History

2 Chronicles - Israel's Spiritual Heritage

Ezra – Restoration

Nehemiah - Reconstruction

Esther - Preservation

Job - Blessings through Suffering

Psalms - Praise

Proverbs - Practical Wisdom

Ecclesiastes - All is Vanity apart from

God Song of Solomon - Love and

Marriage Isaiah - Salvation

Jeremiah - Judgment

Lamentations - Lament

Ezekiel - The Glory of God

Daniel - The Sovereignty of God

Hosea - Unfaithfulness

Joel - The Day of the Lord

Amos - Judgment

Obadiah - Righteous Judgment

Jonah - God's Grace to All People

Micah - Divine Judgment

Nahum - Consolation

Habakkuk - Trusting a Sovereign God

## **New Testament**

Matthew - The Kingdom of God Mark - The Suffering Servant Luke - The Perfect Man

John - The Son of God

Acts - The Spread of the Gospel

Romans - The Righteousness of God

1 Corinthians - Christian Conduct

2 Corinthians - Paul's Defense of His Apostleship Galatians - Freedom in Christ

Ephesians - Blessings in Christ

Philippians - The Joy-Filled Life

Colossians - The Supremacy of Christ

1 Thessalonians - Concern for the Church

2 Thessalonians - Living in Hope

1 Timothy - Instructions for a Young Disciple

2 Timothy - A Charge to Faithful Ministry

Titus - A Manual of Conduct

Philemon - Forgiveness

Hebrews - The Superiority of Christ

James - Genuine Faith

1 Peter - Responding to Suffering

2 Peter - Warning Against False Teachers

1 John - Fellowship With God

2 John - Christian Discernment

3 John - Christian Hospitality

Jude - Contending for the Faith

Revelation - The Unveiling of Jesus

## **The Meeting Location**

- Meet in an informal and accessible location. This could be a local/central coffee shop, cafe, or other casual place (think: Heritage House, Starbucks, Panera, etc). Your home can also be a great place if it isn't too far out of the way.
- Meet in a location where you can control and limit noise, distractions, and interruptions as much as possible.

## How to Prep

1. Determine the Big idea of the content.
2. What do you want your student to do with the information? How do you want them to respond?
3. Apply the truths of the lesson to their season of life.
4. Apply the truth of the lesson to yourself.
5. Think of specific examples you can share from your life to create good conversation & introspection

## Handling Traumatic Life Circumstances

Life happens, and it will happen to you and the student(s) you meet with. While there will be opportunities for you to pray for, encourage, and speak truth into the hardships and sufferings that life brings, we want you to remember first and foremost: **You are a Mentor and a mentor coming alongside the student in their walk with Christ and pointing them back to Christ.** So, do encourage, comfort, show compassion, empathize, pray for, and point the student back to what God's Word says and who God says He is. However, **you are not a counselor**, you are not leading a recovery group, and you are not a confessional to bear the sins of your student(s). Therefore, if you feel a situation or circumstance has been shared that you feel is beyond your ability, knowledge understanding, or role as a Mentor to handle, **PLEASE** talk to Jeremy, Alanna, Jacobi, or Trey. It is what we are here for! We would love to walk alongside your student WITH you in the midst of the circumstances going on in their life. Furthermore, **never promise a student absolute confidentiality.** If a student shares anything that alludes to suicide, abuse, or other life-threatening circumstances, you **must** report it to the Well staff immediately. <sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## Coaching Questions

**Asking intentional questions is the best and most fruitful way to fuel mentoring relationships.** Each question during mentoring should be to accomplish an intentional goal. We've taken coaching questions from "**TransforMissional Coaching**" to show you examples of what different types of questions can accomplish:

### Listen Actively

- How is your ministry going?
- How are you personally?
- How is your family?
- How is your walk with the Lord?
- What concerns or preoccupies you right now?

### Celebrate Wins

- What are you excited about?
- What is your greatest accomplishment this month?
- What prayers have been answered lately?
- How has God shown you His faithfulness?
- Where have you shown growth or improvement?

### Care Personally

- What can I be praying with you about?
- What help do you need?
- Where / how do you receive support and encouragement?
- How are you taking care of yourself (sleep, eating, exercise, play...)

### Strategize Plans

- What is your vision? What do you value?
- Do you have a plan of how you will accomplish your vision and prioritize your values?
- What are your immediate priorities?
- How are you growing spiritually?
- How are you growing in your gifts, abilities, and leadership?

### Evangelism and Mentoring

- Who are people that you are developing friendships with that aren't followers of Jesus?
- How do you share the gospel with someone?
- Is there someone in your life you can mentor?
- How does mentoring fit into your life / ministry?

## **Family Issues / Relationships**

- How are each of your family members getting enough of your time and attention?
- When are you going home next?
- How well are you balancing your family / friends with work and school?
- Are there any family issues you are avoiding or not wanting to confront? Why?

## **Interpersonal Relationships and Resistance**

- How do you respond to resistance from others?
- Are there any unresolved conflicts in your inner circle of friends right now?
- What are boundaries you struggle to keep / establish in dating?

## **Listening Skills**

- How and when do you listen to God?
- How and when do you listen to others with different beliefs / viewpoints than you?
- How and when do you listen to authority?
- How can you improve your listening skills?

## **Prayer and Spiritual Disciplines**

- What have you been reading in the Bible lately?
- Where do you currently find yourself resisting God?
- What specific things are you praying for?

## **Time Management**

- What do you wish you had more time for?
- What is the difference between urgent tasks and important tasks? How do you balance both?
- What personal and time-management tools do you use?
- How and when do you say no?
- Based on your schedule, what would people say you prioritize? Are those your top priorities?

## **Developing Character & Leadership**

- What is one area in which God is asking you to grow?
- How might Satan try to invalidate your ministry or “take you out” if given the chance?
- Where are your finances? Are they under control, under stress, in debt?
- How is your sexual purity? How are you tempted? Are you giving in to fantasies?
- What are your greatest areas of confusion or fear about your relationship with the Lord right now?
- How would people describe you?
- What do you want to be true of you by the end of the year?

## Get to Really Know You Questions

We have much to learn from each other and what God has done and is doing in our life. Here are some of the best questions that can steer entire conversations. These are especially key at the start of your relationship.

### Getting to Know You...

- What are your passions? Where did you get your passions? Where do you think they came from? Where/how are you using them?
- What do you love most about what's going on in your life right now?
- What is the hardest thing going on in your life right now?
- What fruit of the Spirit is most abundant in your life right now? Least abundant?
- What are things you're involved in right now? Why?
- Is there a goal you have set for yourself this year/semester/month? How are you doing in achieving it? Why did you set it?
- Where do you see God at work in your life?
- What's the biggest challenge you are facing in \_\_\_\_\_ (could be life, school, job, roommates, quiet time, family, friends)?
- What stirs your affections for Jesus? In other words, what draws you closer to Him?
- What steals your affections for Jesus? In other words, what distances you from Him?
- When was the last time you share your faith? Tell me about it.
- Do you enjoy prayer? Why or why not? What have you prayed about/for lately?
- What areas do you feel defeated / anxious / hopeless in life?
- Are there areas you struggle to obey God, or consistently disobey Him?
- What are the things you fear most? Why?
- Is there anyone (or a type of person) that you fear, dislike, criticize, or resent? Why? What are you doing about it?
- How has Christ made Himself real to you? Is He real to you?
- What do you grumble and complain about most? Do you do it consistently?
- How do people see Christ in you?
- How do you feel the Lord has gifted you? How do others feel He's gifted you? How are you using these gifts... are you?
- How have you seen God heal / redeem / use a past struggle or experience?
- What do you do in your free time?
- If you knew you couldn't fail and money was no object, what would do in the next five years?
- What are you most looking forward to this semester/year?
- What are (any) fears/concerns you have about this semester/year?
- Is there anything in your personal life/walk with the Lord/ministry that I can help you with?
- What are areas in your life that you want accountability, or to be pushed in?
- When and how do you read the Word?
- What are the most helpful things we can do to care for someone suffering? Who is lonely?

- Has there been a time when you've felt forgotten by God, or that He wasn't coming through?
- What is the biggest disappointment you've faced?
- What role has church played in your life?
- What have you learned about loving people who are different than you?
- What is your family like?
- How do you organize your day? What are the best things you do every day?
- How do you care for yourself?
- How are you / can you make the most of your current season in life?
- What is the best way to start the day? End the day?
- How has God provided for you over the years?
- What attribute of God is hardest for you to trust? Why?

### **Other helpful components when getting started... Life Stories**

Take turns sharing your testimonies and discussing your spiritual pilgrimage / life story... what are important life events that have happened (both good and bad) that make you who you are today? An easy way to do this is to think of 3 places, 3 people, and 3 events (can be positives or negatives) that have impacted who you are and your walk with the Lord. Or, bring pictures of special moments, events, people, etc. in your life and share the meanings that correspond with each picture. If you have worked in the huddle model, you can utilize Kairos moments and/or story boards to guide this process.

### **Set Goals**

At the beginning of the semester/year, ask your student(s) for their goals. What are some things that they want to do, change, or grow in? Categorize goal setting something like this: School-related, personal, spiritual, etc. Write the goals down and ask occasionally how they're doing and how you can help.<sup>[P][SEP]</sup>



## Reflection Questions for Scripture

**A question that leads to a response & reflection at the heart-level is the goal for any question.** Your mentoring time will be most effective when it helps expose our fallen condition (a heart inclined toward finding life outside of a relationship with Christ), and when it points to Christ for the redemptive solution.

First, ask questions that help them envision implementing the concept/truth. Next, ask questions that expose heart-resistance to Christ. In other words, what about our fallen condition is exposed in this passage? Then, ask questions pointing your group to Christ, His grace, and/or His healing.

**These types of questions point a person away from wanting to work harder at changing their behavior to pointing them to Christ as the only source of growth and life.**

### Characteristics of Good Questions

Good questions can be briefly answered because they're narrowly focused.

- Good questions are **clear**.
- Good questions require **honesty**, but not "sin confession."
- Good questions can be answered by **everyone** in the group.
- Good questions cannot be answered "**Yes**" or "**No**."
- Good questions allow for **diversity** of response.
- Good questions let someone share about **themselves**, rather than their opinion about issues.

### Incorporating different types of questions into your meeting

**Questions are crucial because they engage group members and prevent them from being "sponges" that merely soak up information.** Good questions allow group members to think for themselves, come to their own conclusions, and retain information they learned because they discovered the answer on their own instead of being told.

Here are some examples of types of questions you can ask throughout your meeting time:

### Observation Questions (What does it say?)

- Who are the main characters in the passage?
- What do we know about their background prior to the events taking place in this passage?
- How do the characters in the story interact with each other?
- When in the life of the central characters does this story occur?
- Where is the story taking place?
- What is the time of day / day of week / season of the year?
- What occurs in the passage right before this one? The passage right after this one? Does this add any insight to our understanding of the passage we are discussing?

- What action is taking place in this passage?
- What aspect of life is being addressed? What blessings / punishments / consequences are described?
- Can we identify a central theme or point of the passage?<sup>[11]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

### Interpretation Questions (What does it mean?)

- Definitions  
In a sentence or two, what does \_\_\_\_\_ really mean?
- Words  
What action words or descriptive words stand out in the passage? What conclusions can we draw from the use of these terms?
- Synonyms  
What are some other words / phrases that means the same as \_\_\_\_\_?
- Differences  
What is the difference between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
- Similarities  
What is the similarity between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
- Relationships  
What is the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
- Contrasts  
Why does this verse say \_\_\_\_\_ when other passages seem to emphasize the opposite?
- Principles  
What principles for living emerge from this passage?
- Omissions  
What other things might the characters have said / done?  
What conclusions can we draw based on the fact that they did not say / do these things?
- Explanations  
How do we explain the comment / action \_\_\_\_\_?
- Extremes  
What comment / action is the least important? The most important? Why?
- Commands  
Is any aspect of this passage presented as a “command?” What are the implications of this command?<sup>[11]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

### Significance Questions (What does it matter?)

Based on this passage...

- Is there a talent / ability / strength I have that needs to be used more effectively?
- Is there a weakness I have that needs to be strengthened?
- Is there a spiritual discipline (prayer...Bible reading...giving...) that I need to add to my life?
- Is there a relationship that needs to be strengthened or repaired?
- Is there a sin I need to confess?
- Is there someone I need to go to and apologize? Ask for forgiveness?

- Is there someone that I need to ask to pray for me / hold me accountable in this area?
- Is there someone or something in my life currently that needs to be added / removed? How will I do this?

### **Good questions require good listening**

Listening is the other half to asking good questions. As you listen, your questions become more pertinent. And, those in your group will more likely participate in the discussion.

- **Be an “in-their-shoes” listener.** See the situation from their perspective, and try to understand the emotion expressed in their comments.
- **Be an active listener.** Understand what the other person is communicating. If you are unclear about what they are trying to say, rephrase in your own words what you believe was just said. For example, “I’m not sure I caught that, Kristen. Let me see if I understand you. You think that Christians aren’t lonely because they have a relationship with God. Is that right?”
- **Be an encouraging listener.** Verbally respond to their questions and answers by saying something positive: “That answer shows you’re thinking.” “Great, that’s right ...” (repeat what they said).
- **Be a “total body” listener.** Maintain eye contact with the person speaking and be aware of your posture. Certain positions (like crossing your arms or leaning back in your chair) communicate less concern than other positions, like leaning.

## Handling Discussion Problems

**It's not a matter of if you run into these problems, but when.** Learn from these problems, grow as a group leader, and push your group to be as attentive, engaged, and vulnerable as possible.

When you don't know what to do, pray. Ask God to give you wisdom. And of course, you can also talk to the Well staff or your Mentor about what to do. Whatever happens, don't get too stressed. Every great group has had its share of discussion disasters.

### 1.) Dead Silence

**"My group is totally silent after I ask a question. It's as if they have taken a vow of silence."**

- If the question was good, relax; people need time to think. If you can't tell if they're thinking or confused, ask, "Does what I'm asking make sense?"
- **Rephrase the question.** For example, you asked, "Who do you have trouble forgiving?" and the group is silent. You aren't sure whether they are thinking about it, or scared, or didn't understand the question. You could ask it differently such as, "Is there anyone you hold a grudge against? Would anyone like to share an example?"
- **Don't fill the silence with preaching.** Keep your own answers to a minimum and work on asking good questions.
- **Encourage them with your nonverbal communication.** Maintain good eye contact. Smile. Be relaxed. Lean toward the person speaking as you listen. Nod your head as you listen.
- Express appreciation when people grasp new ideas, express feelings or ask questions.
- Call on individuals who look like they want to say something.

### 2) A Wrong Answer

**"The biggest problem I have is when someone gives the wrong answer. I just kind of sit therewith a nervous, awkward smile and go, 'Uh ... Err ... Umm.'"**

- Use discernment. Determine if it's a wrong answer or just a perspective different from yours.
- Be gracious and gentle. Don't get flustered.
- **Redirect the question** to another individual or to the rest of the group. Say something like, "Does anyone else have a different perspective or anything to add?"
- **Refer the group back to the passage** and guide them to discover the truths in it.
- If it's an off-the-wall response, say something like, "That's an interesting thought. How did you come to that conclusion?" **Lead them to the truth gently.**
- **Use wisdom in determining which errors to handle in a group setting.** It's best to avoid certain discussions in the group. For example, an erroneous comment such as, "God helps those who help themselves," can likely be corrected by the group. Furthermore, discussing this misconception is likely to be good for

everyone in the group. However, be wary of a comment like, “The Bible doesn’t prohibit homosexuality. In fact, most scholars think David was a homosexual.” A possible response might be: “What passages have you read in the Bible about homosexuality? (Expect silence.) I don’t want to chase that topic now, but I think if you read the passages for yourself you might conclude differently. I’ve got some information I can get to you.” Then meet with the person individually.

- Exclude the incorrect answers when you are summarizing. [SEP]

### 3) Disastrous Distractions

**“Every week in the middle of group some distraction always comes up. Usually a phone rings, a roommate comes in for a book, or everybody wants to leave early for a TV show.”**

- Ask everyone to silence their phones before starting. Or, make a phone basket where everyone puts their phones for small group.
- Meet somewhere that’s less distracting.
- If someone continually has schedule conflicts, reevaluate if your small group is the best fit.
- Whatever the interruption, don’t lose your patience. If you get exasperated or angry, you’ll cause uneasiness in your group and only make it worse.
- Put a sign on the door. Be creative and not dogmatic. “Bible study...Keep out!” is not what you want to communicate. Try, “Bible study going on 7-8 p.m. Feel free to join us.”

### 4) The Difficult Question

**“The other day one of the guys asked me if Christ was going to come before the tribulation. I’ve read Revelation, but I’m not a Bible scholar.”**

- **Admit you don’t have a good answer, but tell them you’ll look into it.** Then ask your mentor if they know the answer or have the resources for you to study this yourself.
- **Ask them why** they want to know. It may be something they’re only slightly curious about. Don’t put hours of work into finding an answer someone is not really interested in knowing.
- It could be a great question for them to research and bring back to the group. You might need to give them some materials to get started. [SEP]

### 5) Can’t Finish the Lesson

**“All the girls in my group have such a good time together that I can’t get through a lesson.”**

- If they like to talk and share too much at the beginning of the group: Set guidelines and let them know there will be times to share, play, and get to know each other. But the central purpose for your weekly time together is to spend time learning from God and His Word.
- Be careful with icebreakers. Keep them moving and don’t let them eat up a lot of time, unless you’re planning on it. Prioritize your lesson. Allot a specific amount

of time to spend on each section. Don't be afraid to say, "This is all good, but we need to move on."

- Plan ahead on which questions / points you'll omit if you are short on time. Encourage brief answers so more people will have time to speak.
- Some discussions are so profitable you won't want to move on. When that happens, be flexible. Choose an appropriate place to end the lesson and pick up where you left off or move on to a new lesson next week.

## 6) The Silent Member

**"Whenever I'm with Tracy alone she's a chatterbox, but get her in a group, and it's hard to get her to say a thing."**

- Some people are **internal processors**, so they think through all that is being said to form their opinions or understanding of the topic.
- They might feel **inferior**, overshadowed by louder group members, or feel a lack of spiritual/biblical knowledge compared to others in the group. Communicate acceptance of where everyone is in their walk/maturity with the Lord often.
- Ask direct, but low-risk questions a shy person could answer comfortably. Like, "Tracy, I'm interested in your thoughts. What do you think about what we've been talking about?"
- Sit where you can maintain good eye contact with those who seem reluctant to speak out.
- Give positive feedback when a shy person responds to encourage further responsiveness.
- Ask them. Call or text something like, "Hey \_\_\_\_\_! I am so glad you are in our small group this semester! I've noticed you tend to be more quiet during discussion times, so I wanted to follow up with you to see what you're learning or processing! I hope that you feel comfortable to share in small groups, but I totally understand if you're an internal processor and simply like to take things in. Just let me know; I hope you have a great day today!"

## 7) The Non-Stop Talker

**"I really like Dan, but he just talks and talks and talks. The other guys try to say something, and Dan interrupts them. Or it's like a ping pong match—they say something; then he says something. He dominates the group."**

- Direct your questions to other members in the group: "Let's hear from some of you who haven't had a chance to say anything yet."
- Sit next to the person and minimize eye contact.
- Ask privately for the talker's help in drawing out quiet members or to minimize his answers.

## 8) Going Off On Tangents

**"I don't know how the guys did it but we started off talking about prayer, and before long we were talking about sports we played in high school. These guys seem to have the gift of tangents."**

- Use a good question to put the discussion back on the right track.

- Say something like, “That’s an interesting topic, but since today we’re focusing on \_\_\_\_\_, let’s talk about that. If we have time later we can come back to this topic.”
- Jokingly say, “Well, speaking of our identity in Christ...” when the tangent is far removed from the actual topic.
- If there are specific people that are consistently taking the group on tangents, talk to them privately and ask them to help you keep the group on topic during discussion time.

### 9) Disagreements & Conflict

**“These two girls can’t agree on anything, whether it’s about guys or the Gospels. They’re going to kill each other by the end of the semester.”** <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

- Don’t let disagreements rattle you. Often they can aid in learning.
- If two people disagree on a certain point, it may be profitable to talk about the two opinions. It makes group members think and encourages interaction. Say something like, “This is good. It means both of you are thinking. Let’s look at both of your ideas and see if we can sort out what the Bible says.”
- If a disagreement persists that you don’t want to address in group, say, “You might want to carry on that discussion after Bible study. Let’s look now at the focus of our study today.”
- If a disagreement is a matter of personal preference, say something like, “I suppose we all have our opinions on that,” and continue the lesson.
- If two group members regularly bicker, you might need to talk about it with each of them.

### 10) Leader Answering All the Questions

**“My group members are always asking me what I think. I feel like I do all the talking.”**

Here are ways you can respond when someone asks you a question you want them to answer:

- Direct another question to a specific person in the group. “Judy, what are some things Paul says about love in this passage?”
- Reverse the question back to the person, “That’s a good question. What do you think?”
- Relay the question back to the group, “That’s a good question. What do you all think?” <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## The Multiplication Process of Mentoring

The nature of mentoring is for it to be multiplied.

**At the beginning of the year**, communicate the hope and vision for your time together is to eventually be replicated with others. Explain God's call for Christ-followers to make Mentored. **About halfway into the year**, begin to coach and train this student intentionally for the purposes of equipping them with the necessary skills to disciple others. Begin to pray (with them) for the Lord to show them who they need to replicate this process with. **Toward the end of the year**, encourage the full multiplication process; provide helpful and constructive feedback/encouragement as they begin meeting with someone.

### Character

- Do they have an established, growing relationship with Jesus?
- Are they someone worth following?
- Is their moral authority worthy of being modeled for other students as they grow in their walks with Christ?
- Are they faithful, available, and teachable?

### Competence

- Is this someone who is teachable and able to learn the skills necessary to disciple someone?
- Do they have relational skills to effectively disciple someone?
- Do they display leadership/mentoring skills (facilitating discussions, providing care for others, understanding how God's word applies and impacts life, etc.)?

### Culture

- Are they a member / regular, committed attender of Calvary?
- Do they see mentoring as core to following and imitating Christ?
- Does this person have a passion and understanding for the mission and vision of Calvary, The Well, and mentoring?

### Chemistry

- Have you been able to relationally connect with this person?
- Have you seen this person connect with others?
- Are you comfortable with this person's ability to relate, connect, and care for others?



## Connecting Outside of Your Meeting Time

- A handwritten notes / random call just to talk... surprise them
- Drop by with an unexpected gift, candy bar, baked goods, etc.
- Help according to their needs — run errands, moving furniture, invite them over for dinner
- If they are far from home, offer for them to come home with you for the weekend (especially Thanksgiving!)
- Ask how you can pray for them
- Take snacks over for a study break
- Remember birthdays with a text, a card, or a small gift
- Offer advice on professors, classes or majors.
- Help freshmen connect and get involved on campus.
- Offer advice on how UA works
- Go to the gym together
- Ride to church / sit together
- Go shopping / run errands together
- Go to an athletic event together
- Go on a prayer walk around campus / share Christ with someone
- Invite them over for dinner
- Let them hang out (and do laundry?!) at your house
- Invite them over for a game night / movie night
- Invite them to your kids' games, birthday parties, activities, etc.
- Invite them over to watch an Alabama game if they don't have tickets

**\*\*Remember, think about ways you can fold your students into **ALREADY ESTABLISHED** rhythms. We are all busy and can't add several extra hours of activity. What are you and/or your family already doing that they can come along with you?**

## Group Mentoring

Why disciple in a group? Well, Jesus did it this way and he's the greatest mentor the world has ever known. Jesus knew the value of interaction of group members with one another. In a sense, the group became a community that shared life together, held one another accountable, and learned how Jesus (their mentor) approached, handled, and spoke of situations in others' lives as well as their own.

In particular, here are the specific reasons why we believe in group mentoring:

- 1) **It's efficient.** Why tell three different people the same thing three different times when you could tell it once to all three at the same time?
- 2) **There's intentional structure.** It's better, and more fruitful, to be proactive with measurable goals that you can achieve growth-wise with the students you mentor.
- 3) **Reduces pressure on you.** You get to control the agenda for the group, and when one person isn't talking you can turn to another and ask them their thoughts. Furthermore, others in the group get to share from their life experiences and walks with the Lord how a situation in another's life could be handled.
- 4) **It provides healthy peer pressure.** The fact that there's a group adds an additional layer of accountability for them to show up because, well, the others will. And if they're making it a priority, then they should too.
- 5) **You become a facilitator.** You will be a great mentor when, instead of teaching at your students, you will listen, ask them good questions, bring others into the conversation, and share a relevant story from personal experience to make a point.
- 6) **It will be a blessing for you.** Those you mentor will become dear friends, like family, who will be present for the joys, challenges, accomplishments, and sorrows life brings. You will be blessed with companionship as you do life together!<sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## Resources for You

### For you:

- “Mentor Like Jesus” — Regi Campbell (a lot of things in this packet came from here)
- “Personal Disciple-Making” — Christopher Adsit (a lot of things in this packet came from here, too)
- “The Lost Art of Disciple-Making” — Leroy Eims
- “The Master Plan of Evangelism” — Robert Coleman
- “The Master Plan of Mentoring” — Robert Coleman
- “TransforMissional Coaching” — Steve Ogne & Tim Roehl

### For you with students:

- “Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know” — Wayne Grudem
- “The Gospel-Centered Life: a Nine-Lesson Study” — Bob Thune & Will Walker
- “Next Generation Leader” — Andy Stanley
- “Axiom” — Bill Hybels
- “Don’t Waste Your Life” — John Piper
- “The 21 Most Effective Prayers of the Bible” — Dave Earley
- “Tyranny of the Urgent” (article) — Charles Hummel
- For ladies - Beth Moore Bible studies

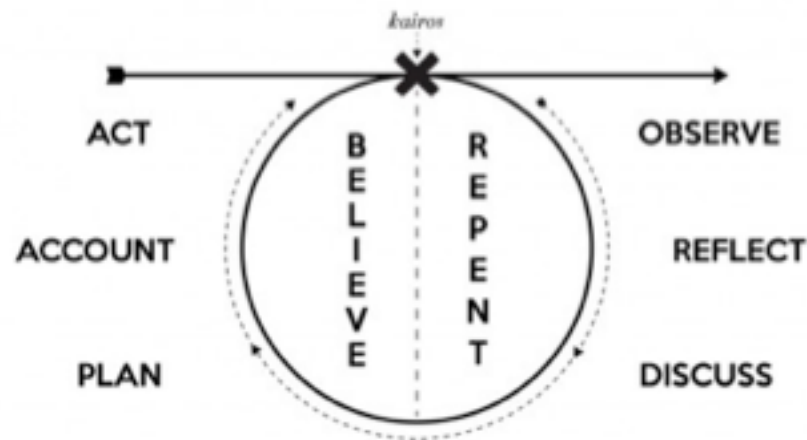
## Key shapes from the Huddle Model

### CIRCLE: Spiritual Breakthrough

As we go through our lives, there are moments of breakthrough—some big, some small. These are moments that reflect *kairos* time (Greek word meaning opportune or appointed time). They are moments that we can choose to ignore, or we can choose to stop and listen to what the Lord might be saying to us. The way we learn to discern the voice of the Lord and follow in obedience is by repenting and believing. This develops our lives as Mentored and constant learners of Jesus.

### Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** and **believe** in the gospel.”



### REPENT

1. Observe: What is the event/experience?
2. Reflect: Was the experience positive/negative? What was the context?
3. Discuss: How did it make you feel/react? What might the Lord be saying?

### BELIEVE

4. Plan: Make a realistic plan to follow in obedience (small steps overall goal)
5. Account: Determine ways the group can hold you accountable
6. Act: Follow through on your plan

Why this process is helpful:

- It helps us to become constant learners of Jesus
- It helps us to recognize important moments and how to learn/grow in light of them
- It helps us to better process the events of our lives to see how God is working and moving in us<sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **SEMI-CIRCLE: Healthy Rhythms**

Since creation, we see a God-designed rhythm for both work and rest. We were created to be productive people and to glorify God in our work. However, just as we see modeled in the life of Jesus, rest is just as necessary in a God-centered healthy rhythm of life.

#### **Genesis 1:26-2:3**

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”

As we learn to reorient our daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms of life to reflect the right balance of both work and rest, we look to the example of Christ. Jesus did nothing apart from the Father. He withdrew to be in prayer with God the Father before going out to do his daily ministry. Just as he was one with the Father, in our daily walks we abide with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Only when we are abiding with him will our lives produce meaningful fruit. As we seek to be healthy Mentored of Christ, there will be seasons of retreat, pruning, growth, and fruitfulness. Each of the seasons are necessary as we seek to be sanctified more and more.

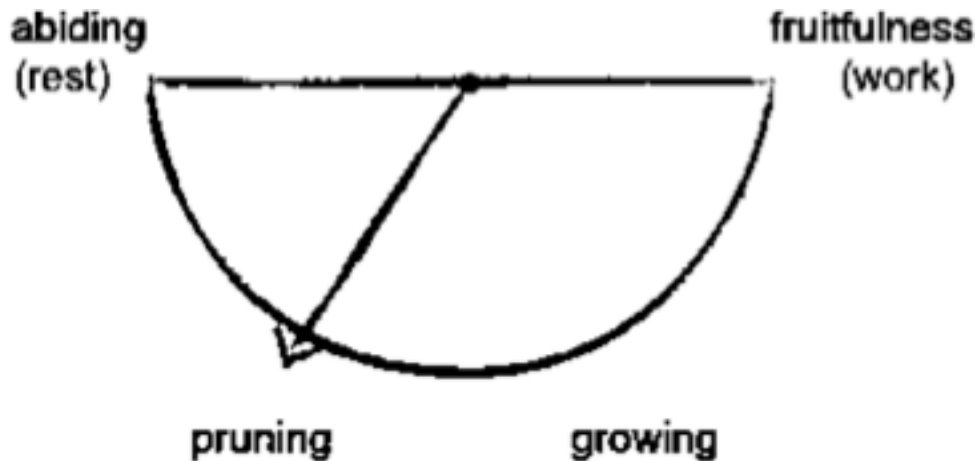
#### **Mark 1:35-39**

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I

came out.” And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.”

### John 15:4-5

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”



Looking at this process like the steady swing of a pendulum reminds us of the necessity of each stage. When we swing quickly from extreme to extreme we vacillate between striving (overworking) and isolation (extreme retreat).

### Healthy Rhythms

**Daily:** Each day should have a consistent pattern of both rest and work. How are you regularly resting in the Lord, being productive in work, and investing in relationships? It is often helpful to make a schedule that reflects each area.

**Weekly:** The span of a week allows for an overall rhythm to be established. At what point do you set aside a day (or at least several hours) to intentionally rest? At what points are you able to incorporate other important relationships and activities that may not occur everyday?

**Monthly/ Seasonally:** There will be seasons that, for various reasons, allow for or demand greater output or times of rest. In extended times of higher output, how are you intentionally finding rest? In longer periods of rest, how are intentionally investing and producing?

Remember, these rhythms will not happen by accident. At each level, we must be intentional in planning and diligent in maintaining these rhythms. They can be modified and adjusted as life changes and circumstances arise, but the core principles should remain.

### **Helpful questions:**

- Do you currently have a consistent rhythm of work and rest?
- Do you tend toward overworking or laziness?
- What are things/people/activities that bring you rest?
- What are areas of your life that may need to be pruned? (Remember these can be good things you may need to say No to now so that you can say Yes later)
- What needs to change about your current patterns (or lack thereof) to have a better rhythm of work and rest?
- How can your community hold you accountable to creating a healthier rhythm?

### **TRIANGLE**

From the life of Jesus, we see that our lives must be focused on intimacy with the Father, community with other believers, and reaching out to those outside of the church. The following passage from Luke shows Jesus' commitment to this life:

#### **Luke 6:12 - Focused on relationship with the Father**

"In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God."

#### **Luke 6:13-16.– Focused on the Mentored (the church)**

"And when day came, he called his Mentored and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor."

#### **Luke 6:17-19 – Focused on reaching others**

"And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his Mentored and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all."

Clearly, as followers of Christ we must live a life that incorporates all three of these relationships. Certainly, nobody will be natural at all three. In fact, most people only excel at one, are moderate at another, and wildly unsuccessful at the final one. This is true even of churches. Just think of your church growing up. I am sure you can easily pick out which one they excelled at, which one they did fairly well in, and which one they barely even acknowledged. In order to keep things straight, we will label these three relationships as UP (relationship with God), IN (relationship with those in the church), and OUT (relationship with those outside of the church, nonbelievers).

These concepts are listed on the next page, along with some helpful questions to ask in order to dive deeper and grow more in these areas.

### **UP – Micah 6:8**

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

From Micah 6:8, we as believers see that we are called not just to talk to God, but to walk with Him. We are called to live in intimate relationship with God, and it is this relationship that will fuel all others. Seek God daily through reading Scripture, through your prayers, and through time spent in worship.

- Do I pursue intimacy with Jesus?
- Am I seeing personal growth in my walk with God?
- Am I living in a state of peace?
- Am I obedient to the Holy Spirit’s prompting?

### **IN – Romans 12:3-6**

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.”

We as believers are called to walk with others. We are each a part of the body of Christ and therefore, we should seek to be a part of the local church in a real and vibrant way. The church needs our gifts, and we need the church in order to live a fulfilled life as members of the body of Christ.

- How are my relationships with my friends?
- How easy is it for me to trust people?
- Do members of my church feel valued/cared for by me?
- Are there any difficulties in my relationships with co-leaders or group members?

### **OUT – Matthew 28:19-20**

“Go therefore and make Disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

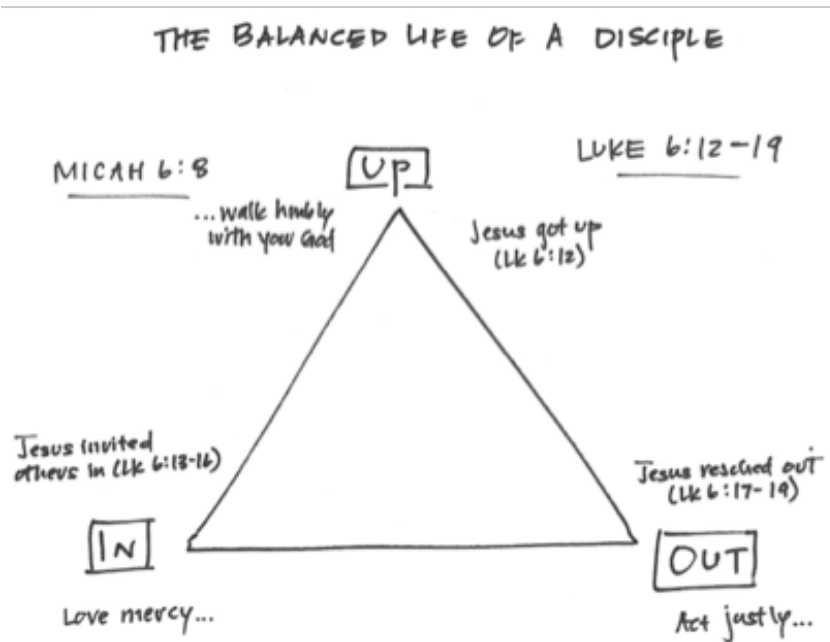
The church is called to be a light to the world. We cannot simply sit in our churches and never reach out. Jesus has given us the great commission and as such, we should seek to reach others for God’s glory.

- Do I have a heart for the lost?



- How often do I share my faith?
- Do I leave time for relationships with non-Christians?
- How welcoming am I to new people?

These concepts are summarized in a helpful shape below:



## APPENDIX C

### MENTORING REVIEW FEEDBACK FORM

#### **Mentoring Questionnaire**

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey!

This survey is being conducted to evaluate our adult mentoring program as part of completing my Doctor of Ministry studies. Your honest answers are going to help guide the evaluation of our adult mentoring program along with it's continued development. Your information will be used in my thesis-project, but all information will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Thanks again for being willing to play a part of helping us become a more intergenerational church.

#### **Survey Consent**

2. Would you like to participate in this survey?

( ) Yes

( ) No

#### **Background Information**

3. First Name:

Last Name:

4. Which best describes you?

( ) Student

( ) Adult Leader

5. Gender:

( ) Male

( ) Female

( ) No Response

6. Did you meet 1 on 1 or in a group?

( ) One on One

( ) Group

7. Who is your mentor:

8. Which student(s) do you meet with?
9. How often do you meet?
10. How long do you meet each time, typically?
11. Briefly describe how your time together is typically spent.
12. What are one or two components of your group / time together that you want to stay the same?
13. What are one or two things you would like to be different in your group / time together?
14. Was the mentoring resources packet and training helpful for your time meeting with the students? Rate Below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Explain your rating below:

15. Do you feel like you connect well with the adult you have been paired with? Rate below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Explain your rating below:

16. Do you feel like you connect well with the student(s) you have been paired with? Rate below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Explain your rating below:

17. You feel like this mentoring process helped you grow as a Christian and a leader? Rate Below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

**Explain your rating below:**

- 18. How likely would you be to recommend this mentoring opportunity to another student outside our leadership team? Rate Below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- 19. What are one or two ways that The Well Staff Team can better help / Support you in the future?**

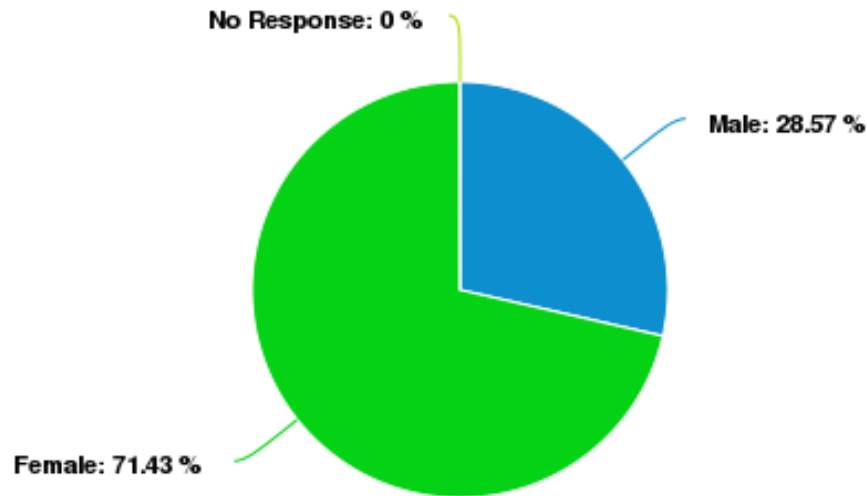
**Is there anything else you want to tell u**

## APPENDIX D

### COLLEGE STUDENT SEMI-STRUCTURED SURVEY RESULTS

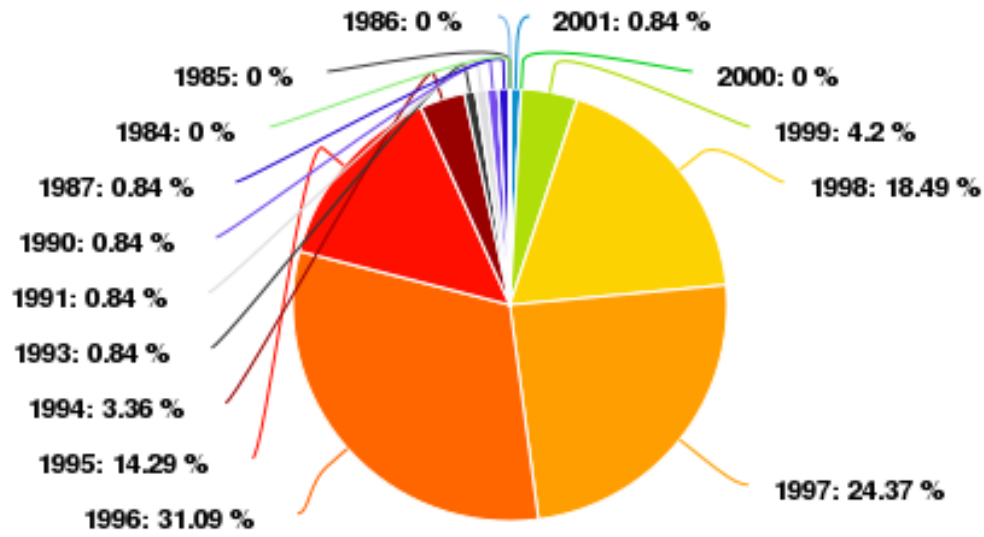
#### Background Information

#### 20. Gender:



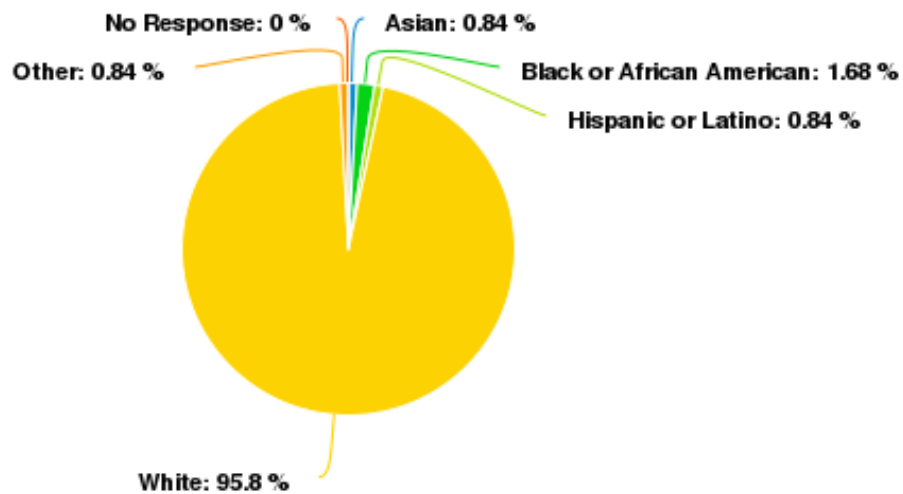
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Female	85	71.43%
Male	35	28.57%
No Response	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

21. In what year were you born:



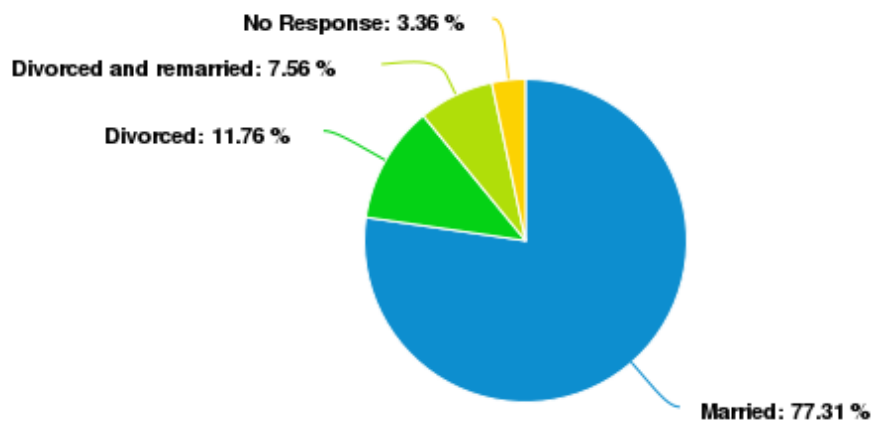
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
2001	1	0.84%
2000	0	0%
1999	5	4.2%
1998	22	18.49%
1997	29	24.37%
1996	37	31.09%
1995	17	14.29%
1994	4	3.36%
1993	1	0.84%
1992	0	0%
1991	1	0.84%
1990	1	0.84%
1989	0	0%
1988	0	0%
1987	1	0.84%
1986	0	0%
1985	0	0%
1985	0	0%
1983	0	0%
1982	0	0%
1981	0	0%
1980	0	0%
1979	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

## 22. Ethnicity:



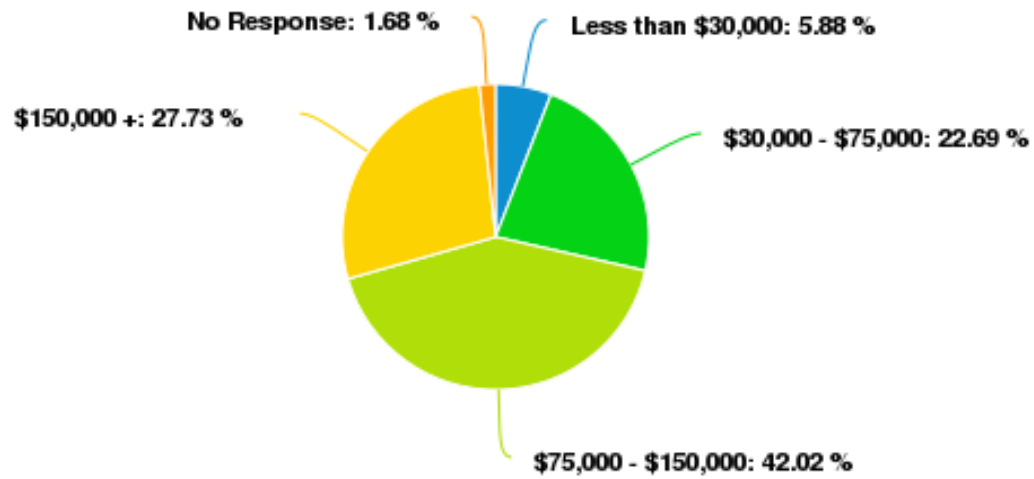
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Asian	1	0.84%
Black or African American	2	1.68%
Hispanic or Latino	1	0.84%
White	114	95.8%
Other	1	0.84%
No Response	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

## 23. Growing up (up to high school graduation), were your parents...



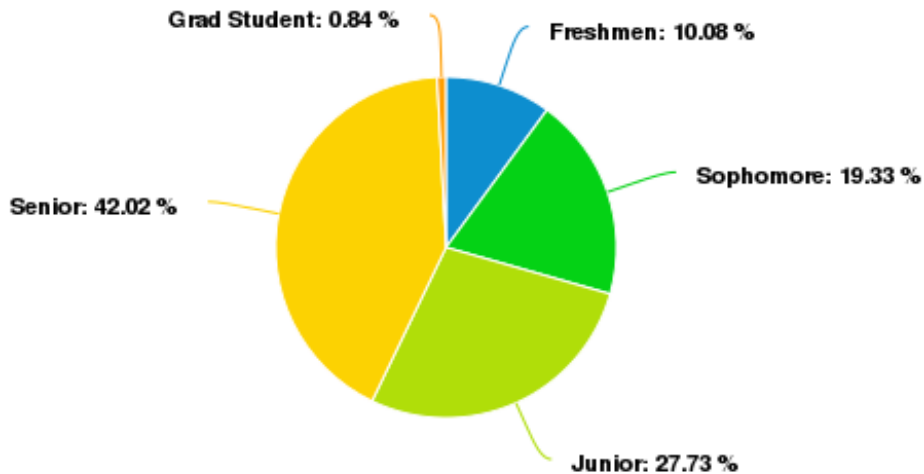
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Married	92	77.31%
Divorced	14	11.76%
Divorced and remarried	9	7.56%
No Response	4	3.36%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

24. Which category below would describe the household income level in which you grew up?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Less than \$30,000	7	5.88%
\$30,000 - \$75,000	27	22.69%
\$75,000 - \$150,000	50	42.02%
\$150,000 +	33	27.73%
No Response	2	1.68%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

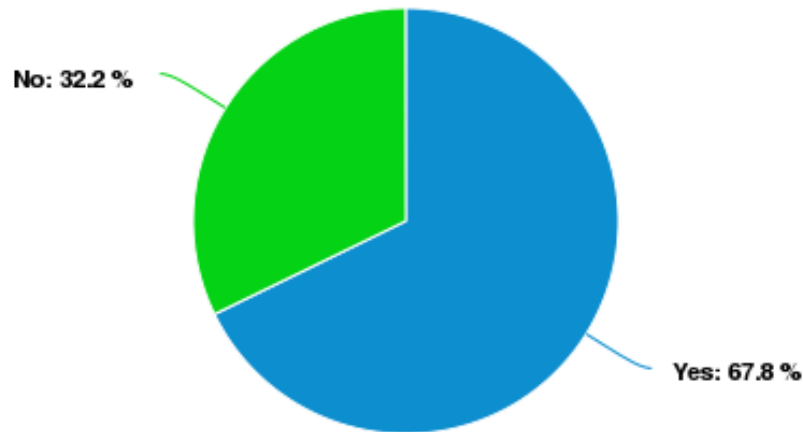
25. What year in college are you?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Freshmen	12	10.08%
Sophomore	23	19.33%
Junior	33	27.73%
Senior	50	42.02%
Graduate Student	1	0.84%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	



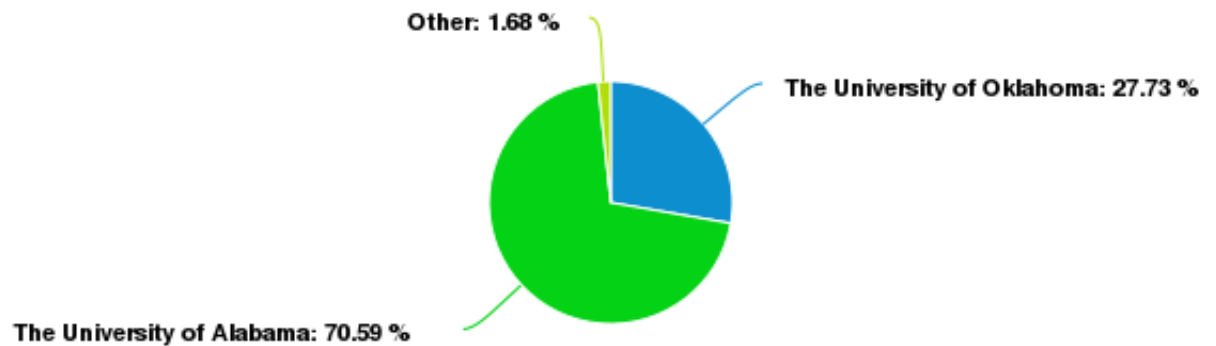
26. Did you attend college in the same state you would consider “home”?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	80	67.8%
No	38	32.2%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>118</b>	

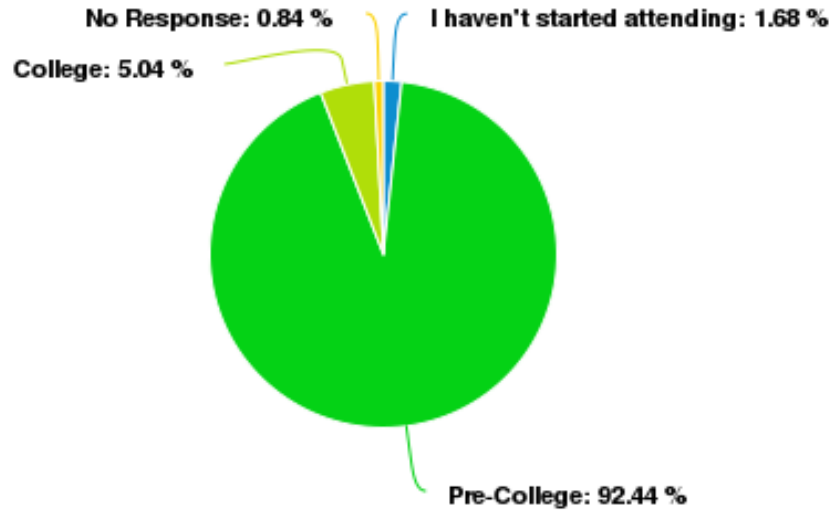
27. If you answered “no,” what would you consider your home state to be?

28. Which college did you attend?



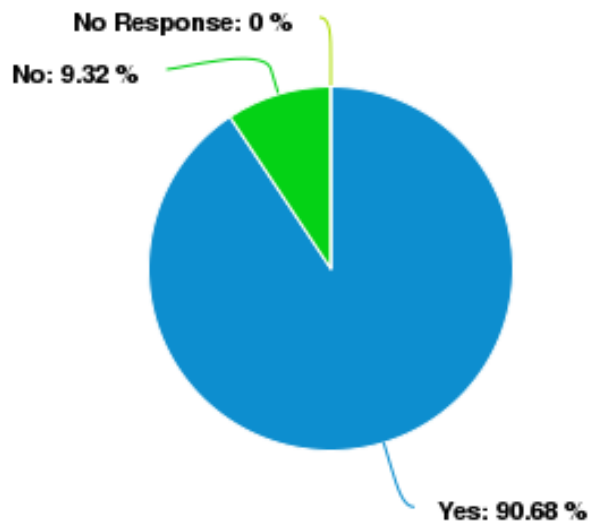
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
The University of Oklahoma	33	27.73%
The University of Alabama	84	70.59%
Other	2	1.68%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

29. When did you begin attending church?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
I haven't started attending	2	1.68%
Pre-College	110	92.44%
College	6	5.04%
No Response	1	0.84%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>119</b>	

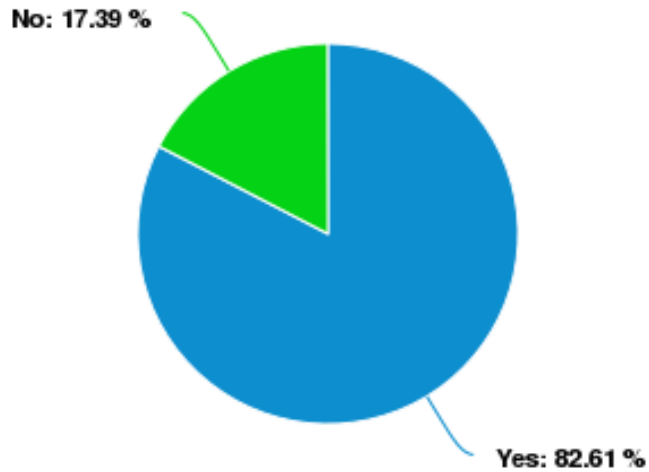
30. Are you currently attending church?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	107	90.68%
No	11	9.32%
No Response	0	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>118</b>	

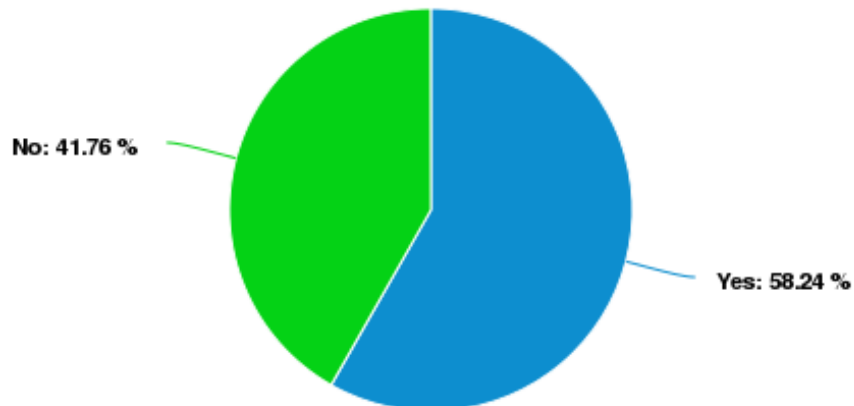
### **Leadership Background**

31. Were you involved in any leadership positions before college?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	95	82.61%
No	20	17.39%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>115</b>	

1. If yes, what were some of the leadership positions in which you served prior to college?
2. If yes, what led you to be involved in these leadership position(s)?
3. If yes, where you mentored / developed in any way during your leadership opportunity(s)?



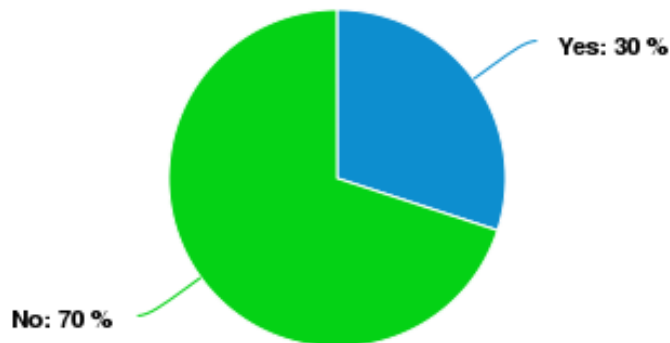
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	53	58.24%
No	38	41.76%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>91</b>	

1. If yes, do you think this mentoring / development relationship was helpful?



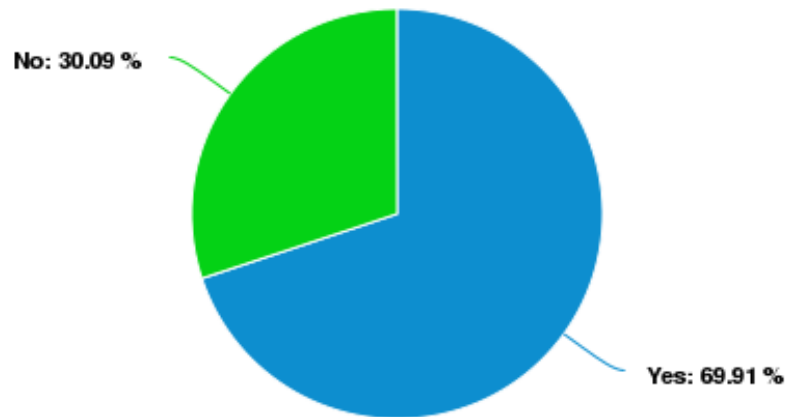
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	51	100%
No	0	17.39%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>51</b>	

1. If yes, what are some things you gained from this mentoring / development program?
2. If no, what were some of the reasons you think the mentoring / development program proved unhelpful?
4. If no, would you have been interested in a mentoring / development program?



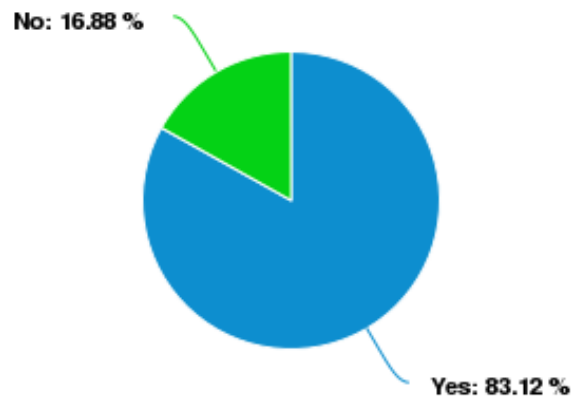
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	6	30%
No	14	70%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>20</b>	

**32. Have you been involved in any leadership positions while in college?**



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	79	69.91%
No	34	30.09%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>113</b>	

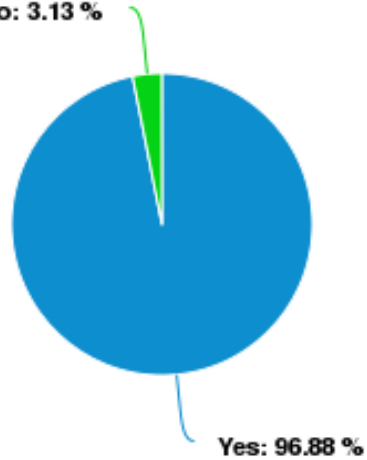
1. If yes, what led you to be involved in these leadership position(s)?
2. If yes, what were some of the leadership positions in which you served while in college?
3. If yes, were you mentored / developed in any way during your leadership opportunity(s) while in college?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	64	83.12%
No	13	16.88%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>77</b>	

1. If yes, do you think this mentoring / development relationship is/was helpful?

No: 3.13 %

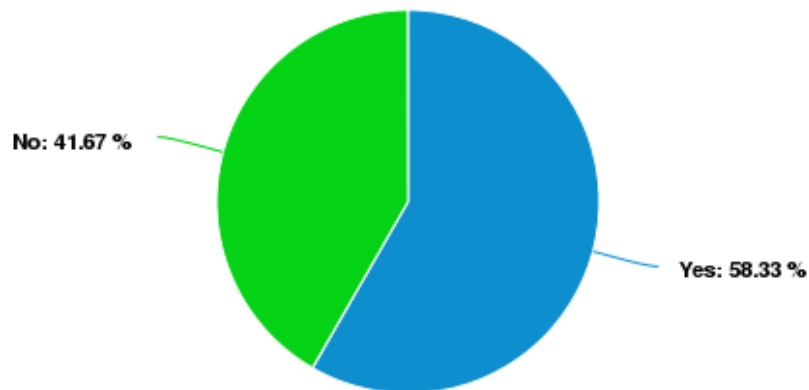


VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	62	96.88%
No	2	3.13%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>64</b>	

1. If yes, what are some things you gained from this mentoring / development program?

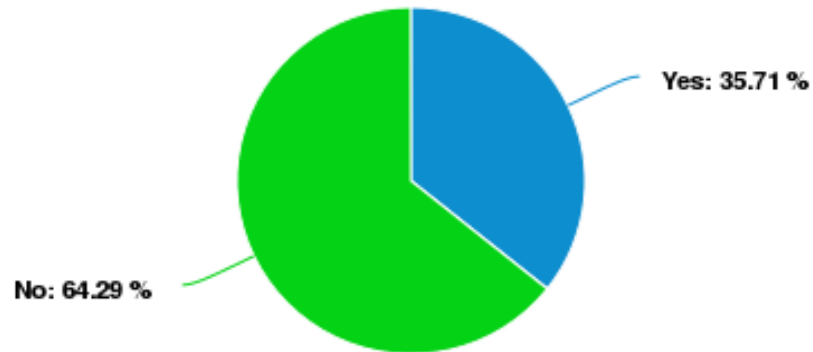
2. If no, what were some of the reasons you think the mentoring / development program proved unhelpful?

4. If no, would you have been interested in a mentoring / development program?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	7	58.33%
No	5	41.67%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>12</b>	

5. If no, if you had known an organization provided a mentoring / development program to those in leadership, would it have impacted your decision to serve in a leadership position?

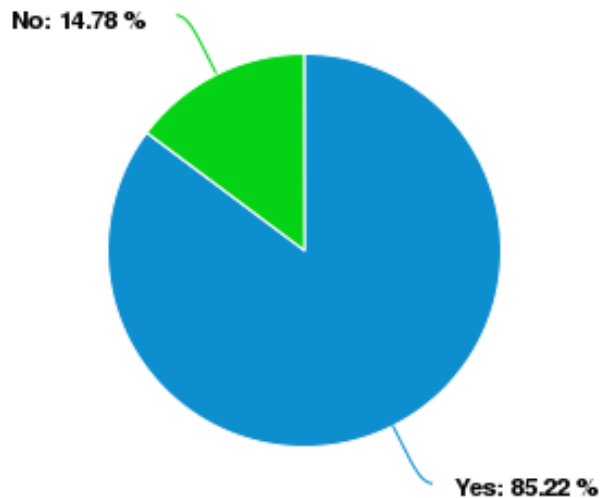


VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	5	35.71%
No	9	64.29%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>115</b>	

1. If yes, why would it have impacted your decision?

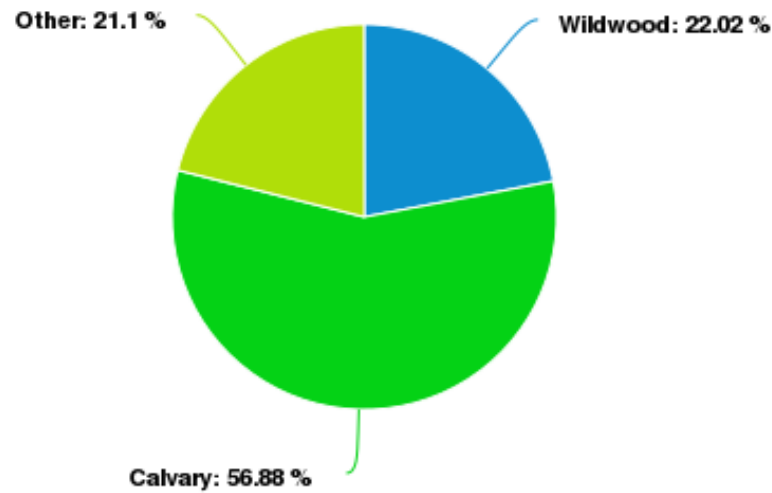
### Mentoring / Development Preferences

2. Are you currently involved in a church?



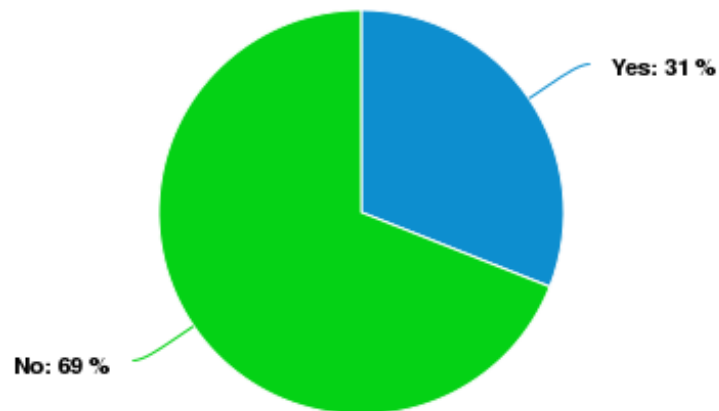
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	98	85.22%
No	17	14.78%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>115</b>	

1. If yes, what church do you currently attend?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Wildwood	24	22.02%
Calvary	62	56.88%
Other	23	21.1%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>109</b>	

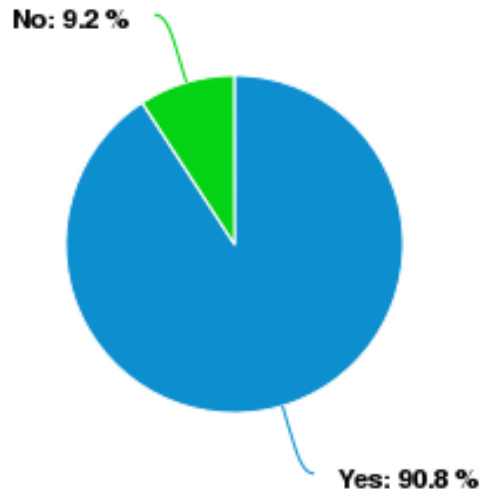
2. If yes, does your church currently offer a mentoring / discipleship program?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	31	31%
No	69	69%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>100</b>	

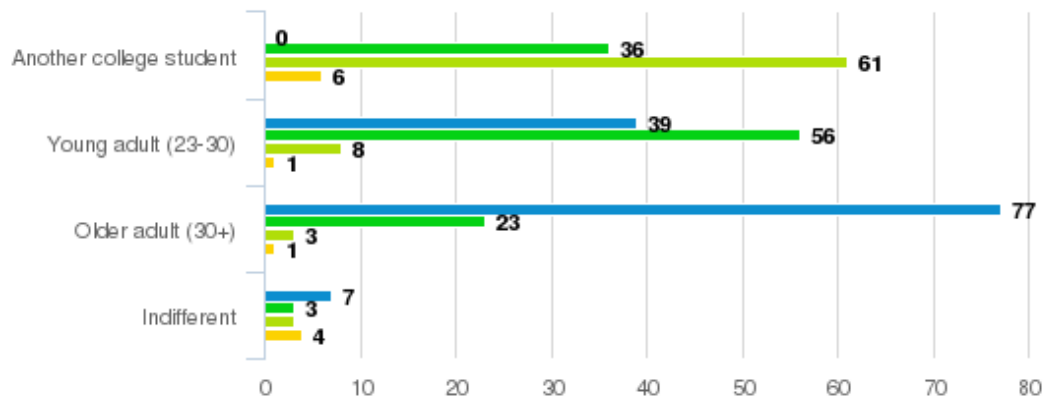


3. If yes, what does your churches current mentoring / discipleship program look like?
4. If no, would you be interested in a mentoring relationship if your church offered it?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	79	90.8%
No	8	9.2%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>87</b>	

1. If yes, why would you be interested in a mentoring relationship?
2. If yes, what age demographic would you like your mentor to be in?  
(Please rank in order of your preference (1) being the most desired (3) being the least)

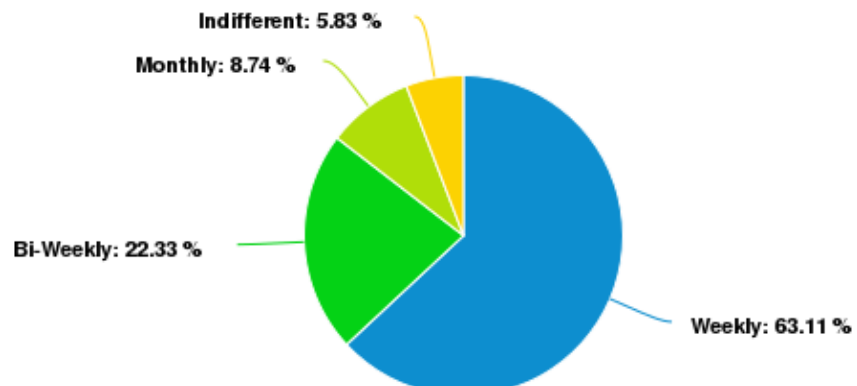


VALUE	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	4 <sup>th</sup> Choice	Count
Another College Student	0	36	61	6	103

Young Adult (23-30)	39	56	8	1	104
Older Adult (30+)	77	23	3	1	104
Indifferent	7	3	3	4	17

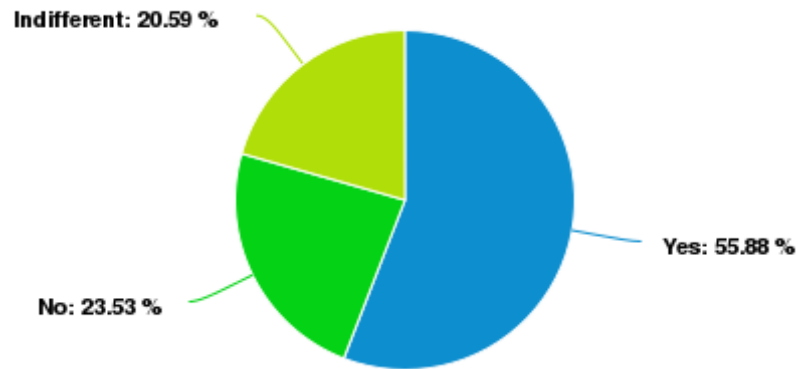
VALUE	Color
1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	
4 <sup>th</sup> Choice	

**3. If yes, how often would your preferred mentor relationship meet?**



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Weekly	65	63.11%
Bi-Weekly	23	22.33%
Monthly	9	8.74%
Indifferent	6	5.83%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>103</b>	

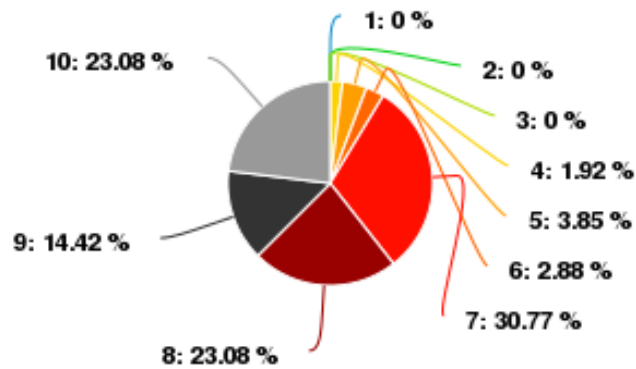
4. If yes, would you be open to having one or more peers participate with you in the mentoring / discipleship relationship in addition to the mentor?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	57	55.88%
No	24	22.53%
Indifferent	21	20.59%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>102</b>	

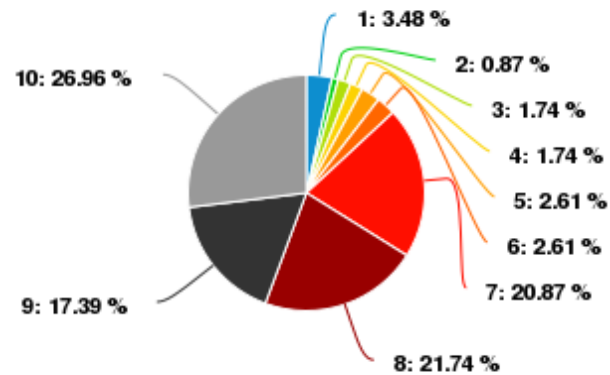
5. If yes, what are some things you would like for the mentoring relationship to include (think life lesson, bible study, book study, etc)

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much influence do you think your mentoring / discipleship relationship would play in your decision to volunteer / lead in your local church? ? (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely)



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%
4	2	1.92%
5	4	3.85%
6	3	2.88%
7	32	30.77%
8	24	23.08%
9	15	14.42%
10	24	23.08%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>104</b>	

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you will look for a church that offers a mentoring program after you graduate from college? (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely)



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	4	3.48%
2	1	0.87%
3	2	1.74%
4	2	1.74%
5	3	2.61%
6	3	2.61%
7	24	20.87%
8	25	21.74%
9	20	17.39%
10	31	26.96%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>115</b>	

**APPENDIX E**

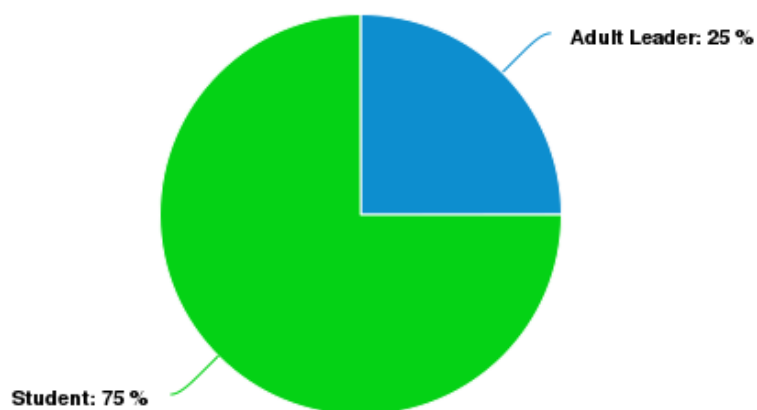
**MENTORING REVIEW FEEDBACK FORM RESULTS**

**Background Information**

33. First Name:

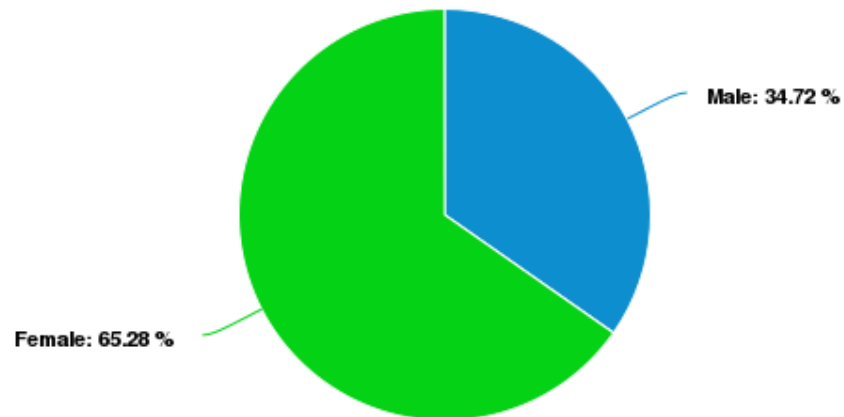
Last Name:

34. Which best describes you?



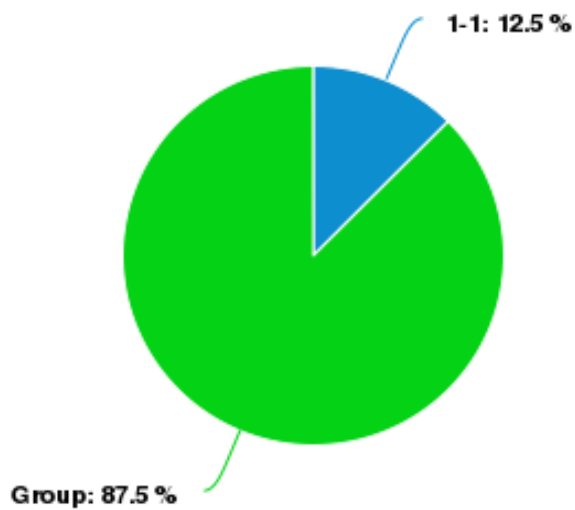
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Adult Leader	18	25%
Student	54	75%
Total Responses	72	

### 35. Gender:



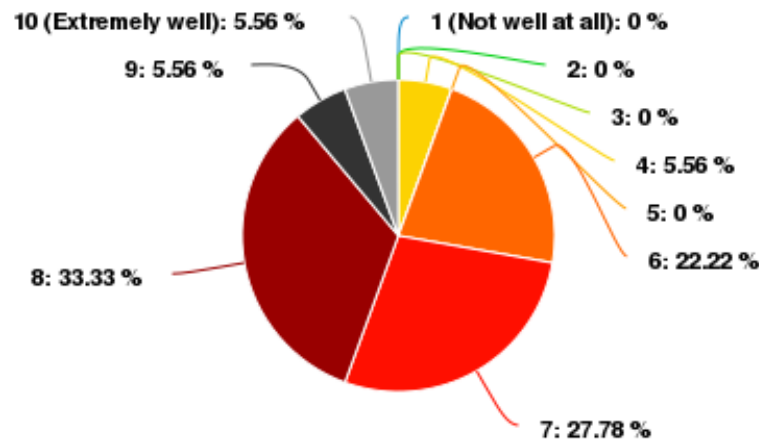
VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
Female	47	65.28%
Male	25	34.72%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>72</b>	

### 36. Did you meet 1 on 1 or in a group?



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1 -1	9	12.5%
Group	63	87.5%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>72</b>	

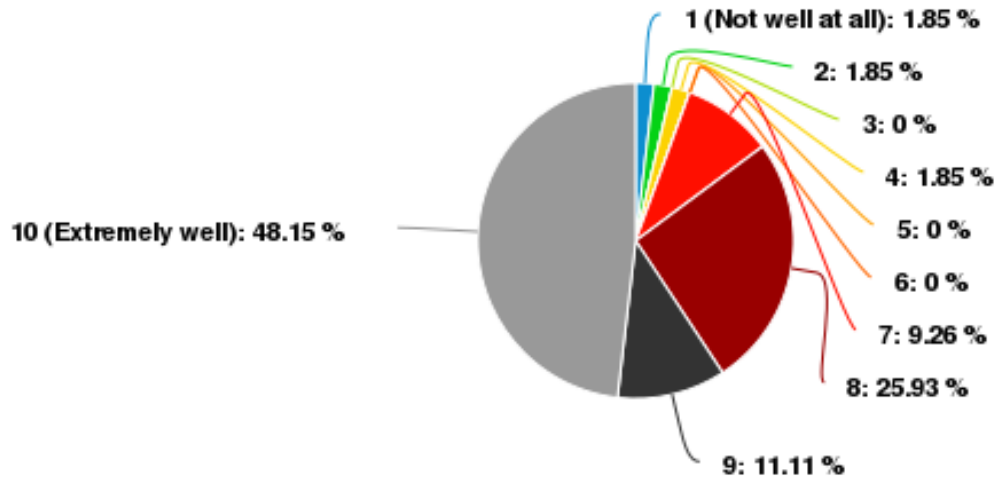
37. Who is your mentor:
38. Which student(s) do you meet with?
39. How often do you meet?
40. How long do you meet each time, typically?
41. Briefly describe how your time together is typically spent.
42. What are one or two components of your group / time together that you want to stay the same?
43. What are one or two things you would like to be different in your group / time together?
44. Was the mentoring resources packet and training helpful for your time meeting with the students? Rate Below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%
4	1	5.56%
5	0	0%
6	4	22.22%
7	5	27.78%
8	6	33.33%
9	1	5.56%
10	1	5.56%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>18</b>	

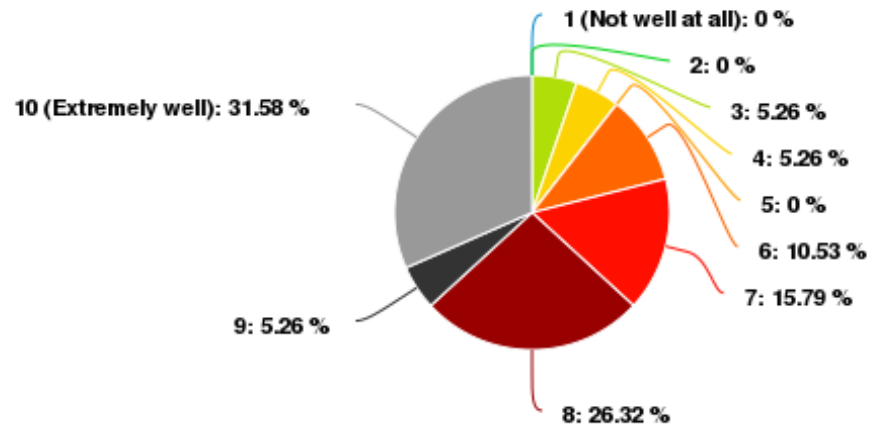


45. Do you feel like you connect well with the adult you have been paired with? Rate below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	1	1.85%
2	1	1.85%
3	0	0%
4	1	1.85%
5	0	0%
6	0	0%
7	5	9.26%
8	14	25.93%
9	6	11.11%
10	26	48.15%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>54</b>	

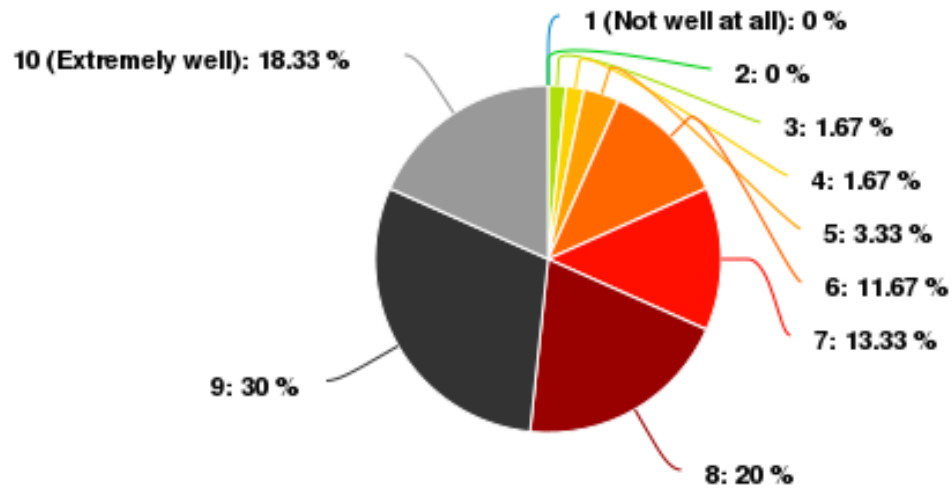
46. Do you feel like you connect well with the student(s) you have been paired with? Rate below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	1	5.26%
4	1	5.26%
5	0	0%
6	2	10.53%
7	3	15.79%
8	5	26.32%
9	1	5.26%
10	6	31.58%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>19</b>	

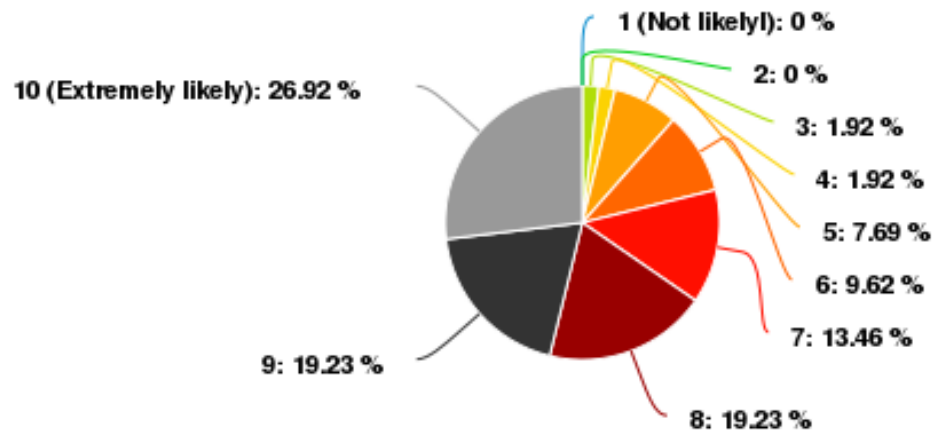
Explain your rating below:

47. You feel like this mentoring process helped you grow as a Christian and a leader? Rate Below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	1	1.67%
4	1	1.67%
5	2	3.33%
6	7	11.67%
7	8	13.33%
8	12	20%
9	18	30%
10	11	18.33%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>60</b>	

48. How likely would you be to recommend this mentoring opportunity to another student outside our leadership team? Rate Below (1 being the least likely, 10 being most likely):



VALUE	COUNT	PERCENT
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	1	1.92%
4	1	1.92%
5	4	7.69%
6	5	9.62%
7	7	13.46%
8	10	19.23%
9	10	19.23%
10	14	26.92%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>52</b>	

49. What are one or two ways that The Well Staff Team can better help / Support you in the future?

50. Is there anything else you want to tell us?

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